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HIBERNIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS.

BY

SIR SAMUEL FERGUSON.

CONTENTS, SECOND SERIES :

AN ADVENTURE OF MAINE O'NEILL'S.

CORBY MAC GILLMORE.

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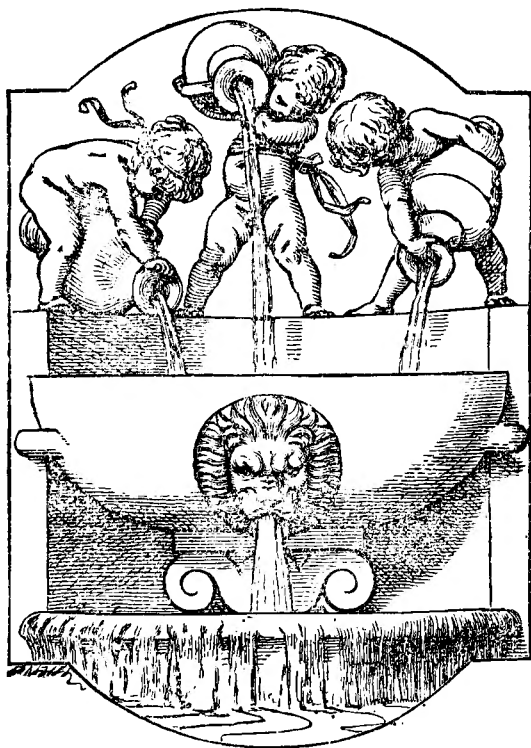
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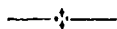
AN ADVENTURE OF SHANE O'NEIL'S.

CORBY MAC GILLMORE.

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HIBERNIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS.

Second Series.



FOURTH NIGHT.

"I do not think I ever spent so long a day," said Henry O'Neill, next night, the moment they were left alone: "come now, Turlogh, sit down and tell us something else."

"Hush, my prince," said the bard; "the warden's men are not yet out of ear-shot; should we be overheard, there would be an end of our entertainments."

"They are gone now," said Henry, after a pause; "I hear their footsteps on the pavement of the yard. Come then, Turlogh, begin some story."

"What would you have, my princes?" asked Turlogh, taking his wonted seat by the fire.

"Let Art choose," said Hugh; "Henry and I have both had our turn."

"Be it so," replied Henry. "Come then, Art, be quick; for I am longing to forget the time."

"But how shall I know what to ask for?" said Art.

"I will tell your nobleness the names of some of my store," replied the bard; "and you shall choose which you like best among them."

The young man gladly assented, and Turlogh proceeded to enumerate the titles of his tales. "Shall I tell your noblenesses that ancient legend of the walls of Ross, or the story of Dame Kettle, or Coghlan na Cashlean, or Corby Mac Gillmore——?"

"Tell us Corby Mac Gillmore," cried Art; "for I love to hear every thing about sweet Claneboy. Was it not there, or in Magennis's country, that the famous outlaw lived?"

"It was in Claneboy," replied the bard, "among the blue hills of Antrim; that you, my prince, shall see, God willing, before you are a month older."

"Heaven grant it!" replied Art; "and since we cannot

have sight of them otherwise than in imagination to-night, let us now fancy Divis and Ben Madigan before us as quickly as we can." Turlogh then drew his seat closer to the hearth, and began the tale of

CORBY MAC GILLMORE.

"At the commencement of the fifteenth century, the territory of Northern Dalaradia was, perhaps, the most barbarous spot in all Ireland. The chief cause of this had been the return of the banished clan of Hugh Boy O'Neill from beyond the Bann, on the murder of William de Burgh about eighty years before. These original possessors of the soil, falling on the British settlers, drove them out of all their acquired territory in Antrim; so that, from the Bann to the Lagan, Carrickfergus was the only spot that remained in the hands of the English. But although the children of Yellow Hugh had thus dispossessed the usurpers, they were still far from having secured the enjoyment of the vacant lands to themselves; for the English, falling back on Dufferin and the Ards, and there leaguings with the great families of White and Savage, two of the most powerful of the early conquerors, maintained a predatory warfare on the borders of their old possessions with such vigour and perseverance as kept their enemies in a state of continued alarm and insecurity. In addition to this daily source of disasters, three invasions of regular English armies contributed to harass the new inhabitants, and to lay still further waste a country already neglected and running spontaneously to ruin. In less than three generations, therefore, from the commencement of these troubles, it was not to be wondered at that a district alternately overrun by contending tribes of men, equally ferocious, and almost equally uncivilized, whose sole object was to render what neither could enjoy

unserviceable to the other, should have fallen into a state of nearly primitive wilderness: and in this condition almost all the south of Antrim was at the period alluded to. The castles of the early conquerors had been razed to the ground or garrisoned by native chieftains; their mills broken down or converted into petty fortalices; their ploughed lands and meadows were overrun with thickets or matted into incipient bogs, while the flocks and herds of their successors, being mainly pastured in the interior, procured such a scanty supply as was needed on their occasional sojourn in the debateable grounds, from a few spots of grazing-land kept clear in almost inaccessible situations among the woods and mountains. Few men who could obtain a subsistence elsewhere, would embrace a life so precarious. Those who permanently dwelt in Northern Dalaradia, were accordingly either the outcasts of the clans of the interior, or such natives as had been forced out of the confines of Dufferin and the Ards, to make way for the influx of dispossessed settlers. Rude as these men originally were, their descendants, after the lapse of three generations spent among such scenes, were vastly worse in all respects, but in none so much so as in point of religious instruction. When there was neither provision nor security for the clergy, it could not be expected that the Church would flourish, for no dread of heresy had yet given to ecclesiastics that zeal which might have urged them to forsake their quiet abodes within the Pale or in the undisturbed interior, for this desolate arena of strife and bloodshed between. While the face of the country, therefore, ran to waste, the morals of the people underwent a like deterioration; the scanty knowledge of Christianity bequeathed by the grandfather, lapsed into an idle superstition in the son, and half-forgotten tradition with the grand-children. Marriage became a civil

contract or a mere concubinage, and christening was abandoned, at first for want of ministers, and then from ignorance of its use. Some had heard of a Creator, but few of a Redeemer, and none could really be said to have lived in the love or fear of either.

It was while this state of things was at the worst, that a monk of the order of Friars Minors, mounted on a mule, was making his way from the abbey of Muckamore, then the only religious house frequented on that side of Lough Neagh, across the mountains to his own priory of Carrickfergus. The lonely brother's path lay along the slope of the hill sides, for all the lower ground was covered with thicket and morass, so that none but a footman trained to such a country, could make good his way through their intricate wildernesses. As he gradually rose into a fuller view of the beautiful valley beneath him, the Franciscan could not but stop and gaze with melancholy pleasure on so fair a scene. "Alas!" he said, unconsciously speaking aloud, "see how this lovely land is run to ruin! There, where the clear river lingers among its holmes, once stood the preceptory of the knights of St. John; and there, within view of its windows, our Lady's chapels of Dunedragh and Nalteen; here was Moylusk, and there was Kilbride, and the bells of Connor used to be ringing sweetly from behind yonder blue hills before me. Woe is me! what are they now but green-gabled ruins, with neither bells nor clergy, but dens of wolves, and outlaws worse than wolves, for they have neither the humanity of men nor the sincerity of the brute animals? Ay, well might the holy Bernard call the people of the same diocese this day, as he did three hundred years ago—'*protervos ad mores, ferales ad ritus, cervicosos ad disciplinam, spurcos ad vitam; Christianos nomine, re Paganos. Non decimas, non primitias redcentes*'—God forgive me, I have for-

gotten the blessed saint's words; but the matter is the same then and now. No; neither tithe nor first-fruits, neither dues nor oblations to God's servants here; no blessed bands of wedlock, no cleansing waters of baptism, no comfortable aid of the confessional among many a family of the sons of Christians! It is a fearful thing to think of, and I cannot but shudder to remember how near our own doors the blame and the shame may lie, on that day when we are all summoned to give an account of our ministry. But it would be but a venturing into the lion's jaws to approach such men with words of peace or charity. There is the fierce outlaw, the unchristened Corby Mac Gillmore; he regards the house of God no more than the castle or the bawn of a settler. Forty churches he has plundered, forty communities of holy monks and nuns he has dispersed or put to cruel deaths. May God look down with mercy on this wasted land! for if Providence do not shortly stay the progress of its desolation, the blessed Patrick might as well never have set foot upon its shores." With a heavy sigh he turned his face again towards the mountains, but had not proceeded more than a few paces when he was startled to hear a voice at a little distance calling for help.

The Franciscan crossed himself and looked around; there was no one in sight; a bare expanse of moorland sloped away towards the wooded vale on one hand; on the other, the ground rose abruptly in green knolls, from amongst which a stream issued and crossed the path at his feet. It was up the winding channel of this rivulet that the call for help had sounded. "God knows what scenes of violence are acting behind these peaceful looking banks," thought the Franciscan; "I am afraid to trust myself off the beaten track; it may be a plan laid to decoy me, or if any other has fallen into ill hands. I may but

share his misfortunes." But the cry came to his ears again, more piercing and imploring. The good brother hesitated. If violence were intended him, he was as much exposed where he rode as in the most secluded glen of the mountains; if his aid could be of any avail to a fellow-creature in distress, he would be unworthy of his calling to refuse to lend it. "I come, my friend—I come," he cried, turning his mule up the little avenue, with a conscious flutter of self-approbation at his heart, although his hand could not but shake from a much less magnanimous emotion as it drew the reins, for brother Virgil, as Fergall Mac Naughten was called in ecclesiastical parlance, was considered a somewhat timid, although zealously pious and benevolent man.

The first turn of the stream brought him in sight of the object of his search. It was a man, alone, seated on the ground, with his head bent down as if listening to the mule's hoofs on the turf. The Franciscan, relieved from his apprehensions of foul play, urged his mule up the rough ravine as fast as the broken ground would permit, and in a few minutes was at the stranger's side. He had not risen on the monk's approach, farther than to sit erect on the overhanging bank, while with quick and impatient gestures he signed to him to come on. He was a man of large stature, and singularly wild aspect and costume, evidently a native of the debateable district. To the monk's inquiry, in what respect his services were needed, he made no reply, but grasping the reins of the mule, whose back, as she stood in the hollow channel, was now almost on a level with his knees, he drew a long brazen skene from his girdle, and the terrified monk next instant beheld the weapon flashing in the sun as his treacherous summoner poised it aloft for his destruction; but the mule, startled at the suddenness of the act, swerved aside, and

rearing at the same time, drew her detainer from his balance where he sat. The blow fell ineffectual on air, and the baffled assailant, pulled from his seat, tumbled headlong into the dry bed of the little river.

The Franciscan's first impulse was to fly; but, ere he turned his mule on the narrow ravine, he cast a terrified glance at his enemy, whom he expected to see arisen and prepared to pursue; but the man lay motionless among the scattered fragments of rock that had received him, and yet the height from which he had fallen was so trifling that he could scarcely be supposed to have been stunned by that mischance. Brother Virgil had now got his mule's head turned, and ventured a second look: his enemy still lay flat where he had fallen. The monk began to recover his courage: "Man of blood," he exclaimed, "what demon hath possessed thee to lay violent hands on one who never harmed thee or thine?"

The prostrate man, raising his head, glanced at him and gnashed his teeth, but made no reply. "Thou art justly punished," continued the Franciscan; "if thou hadst not raised thy hand against a servant of the Most High, thy bones had never been broken, as they seem to be, by such a fall as this. The hand of Heaven, for certain, is made manifest in thy overthrow! Glory to God, and the blessed Francis, I scarce can credit my own escape! *Jesu Maria*, I thought the dagger would have pierced my heart!"

"How?" cried his discomfited assailant, raising himself upon his elbow. "Nay, man, you need not fly," he said, as the monk struck his mule with his riding-switch, the moment he saw his enemy sitting erect; "saw you not at first that I was disabled and could not rise? My legs have been broken since before sunrise; you need not fear me: but answer me—whence come you?"

"From my brethren of Muckamore; I am of the minorites of St. Francis of the Rock, and thither I am travelling," replied the monk.

"Then forgive me, for I have done you wrong," cried the stranger, casting away his weapon as he spoke; and, with all his just resentment against the man who had endeavoured the minute before to take his life, brother Virgil could not but feel that there was an anxious sincerity in his tone and manner that bespoke real regret.

"But, in God's name, what could have tempted thee to raise thy hand against a Christian priest under any circumstances?" he demanded.

"I am under pain," said the stranger in a low voice, without noticing the monk's question. "If you aid me, I will reward you; if you leave me, throw me back my weapon, that I may be able to defend myself against the wolves."

"Canst thou not rise, then?" said the Franciscan, somewhat touched by his extreme helplessness.

"Not, though a waterspout were coming down," replied the other; "and it would be better for me to be washed away in a torrent than to die here of hunger. Come near me; I cannot harm you; only lift me to the bank again, and I will freely give you all I have: there is gold enough in my brooch to buy your saint more tapers than there are hairs on your head: my belt is richly wrought with silver——"

"Nay, man," said the Franciscan, "I care not for thy gold or silver, and it is but my duty to return good for evil; but I fear thee still: I am, in truth, afraid to venture near thee again. Wilt thou swear to me that thou hast no ill design against me?"

"By the sun and wind," exclaimed the prostrate man solemnly, "I swear that I will do you no violence."

"By the sun and wind!" repeated the monk; "these be heathenish oaths wherein I have no faith: swear to me by the cross of our salvation, and perchance I may trust thee."

"I have sworn," was the reply; and helpless though he lay, there was, for the first time, a haughty dignity in the stranger's manner which went further to allay the Franciscan's apprehensions than anything that had hitherto occurred.

But still he hesitated. "Hast thou no greater oath whereby to bind thyself?" he said; "swear but by the name of God, and I will believe thee."

"The oaths of your nation are not binding on me," replied the stranger.

"*Jesu Maria!*" exclaimed the monk, "hast thou no God?"

"I have," replied the other; "I am willing to swear to you by His name."

"Swear, then," said the Franciscan.

The stranger looked upward and extended his hand towards the heavens—" *Dar Righ na nui!* " he said, with increased solemnity.

"By the King of the Elements," said the Franciscan, repeating his words; "and what God is the King of the Elements but my God? Is mensus est pugillo suo aquas—is edit nivem sicut lanam; pruinam tanquam cinerem dispergit—Ignis et grando nix et exhalatio ventus turbineus efficiens verbum ejus."

"Call Him by what name you will," replied the stranger, "you would worship Him better by practising some charity on me, than by claiming a right to the sole knowledge of our common Maker. Call Him Jehovah, if you will, but respect my oath by His name when I call him King of the Elements."

"I am justly rebuked—very justly rebuked," cried the good brother, dismounting, and approaching the wounded man with a pardonable touch of pride in his somewhat ostentatious confidence. "In His name I put my trust, and for the love of Him I will aid thee, though thy hand hath been wantonly raised against my life but now, and I might with little blame leave thee to suffer the just punishment of thine own wickedness." As he spoke he raised the stranger in his arms, and, with considerable difficulty, succeeded in placing him upon the bank. He was dreadfully shattered: one leg was broken below the knee, and the bone of the other seemed dislocated at the hip joint. "Heaven help us!—these are sore bruises," said the Franciscan: "how came you to be so miserably maimed?"

"My horse fell upon me," replied the stranger; "he lies a little higher up in the bed of the stream. I was riding into my own country before daybreak, and missed the way, so that I rode right over the bank where it is full two pikes' length in height. Garran Buy will never cross the hills with me again; he was killed stone dead; and for my own part, I never thought to rise neither, for I lay under him, unable to extricate myself, till I heard the wolves coming; then I got strength to drag my broken limbs from under the carcase, and crawled hither. I heard them growling over him all day; but since I began to cry for succour, they have been silent."

"Holy and blessed Francis!" exclaimed the monk, "'tis a perilous wilderness for peaceful men to journey through! And thou hast lain here since sunrise helpless and without food! 'Twas God's great mercy alone that kept the ravening wild dogs from devouring thee!"

"I slew a bitch wolf and her cub with my skene among yonder bushes in the hollow," replied the stranger: "they

had pursued me so far, as I dragged my broken limbs towards the path along which you came when you heard my cries; but I was unable to crawl farther than where you found me; the place, besides, was convenient for defence, as there were stones of a good size scattered about, with which I drove away another dog about mid-day: he did not venture to approach again, but went off with the dead cub, and devoured it on the hill."

"Staff of Patrick! what a day to spend!" exclaimed the monk, with an involuntary shudder. "But tell me, how didst thou know that there was help at hand to cry for?"

"I heard the beat of your mule's footsteps," replied the stranger, "and I knew that the beast was not running without a rider, for the pace was a managed amble."

"But, tell me truly," said the Franciscan, "wherefore didst thou raise thy hand against me?"

The stranger hesitated. "I thought you an enemy," at length he said.

"An enemy!" cried the Franciscan; "how could one in my garb be the enemy of any man?"

"I tell you, I mistook you for another," replied the stranger. "My enemy might have assumed the garb of your people to deceive me."

"Thou art evading me," said the monk: "thou hadst some other reason for assailing me."

"I had," said the stranger; "but I do not think fit to divulge it. You are safe now. Be satisfied of this—that I mistook you. Nay, if you would hear more, know thus far—I meant to have slain him whom I took you for, and to have ridden hence upon the empty saddle."

"And how couldst thou, with thy broken limbs, have gained the back of any beast of burthen?" demanded the Franciscan.

"From where I sat I could have slid into the vacant seat with little difficulty," was the reply; "and my friends here of the woods would soon have removed all trace of the means by which I had prepared it for my reception." As he spoke, he pointed to the high grounds above, up which a lean wolf was slowly retiring from the remains of the fresh carrion in the ravine. The gaunt beast turned twice or thrice, and looked towards them, showing his white fangs, then clapped his tail to his hams, and crossed the ridge of the hill at a sullen trot.

"It was, indeed, a merciful interposing of God's providence that saved me from his jaws!" exclaimed the monk. "But, now that I have trusted in thee, and found thee trustworthy," he continued, "I would render thee what further aid is in my power to bestow here. Let me place thy limbs in a more easy posture: is thy pain abated now?"

"My best thanks to you, friend," replied the grateful stranger. "I am much relieved."

"Thou hast fasted since before sunrise?" demanded the monk.

"Since before midday yesterday," was the reply.

The Franciscan, without another word, opened his scrip, and spread its contents on the grass. "Ah," he cried, as he took forth the materials of an abundant meal, "good brother Paul hath surely foreseen some such adventure on the road when he so liberally ransacked his larder. Come, my friend, let us forget our strife, and fall to. A draught from this flask of Muscadel will serve to revive thy spirits, if they be low, as a man's may well be after a four-and-twenty hour's fast. This is the ham of a badger—a dainty let me tell you, fit for a lord abbot; here we have fine wheaten bread, and a pair of cold mallard: so, *Deo gratias*, eat and be thankful."

The stranger gazed at him with a mingled expression of gratitude and astonishment. "I am better pleased to have missed that blow than though I had the use of these broken bones again!" he exclaimed. "This wine is worth an earl's ransom to me. I was well nigh spent with pain and hunger;" and he addressed himself to the fare before him with eager appetite.

"Friend," said the monk, "tell me thy name, that I may drink to thy recovery."

"My people call me Hugh Mor M'Adam," replied the stranger.

"And your people—drinking to your speedy recovery, son of Adam—where dwell they?"

"Claneboy is my country," replied Hugh Mor, "and sometimes Kilultagh and Kilwarlin."

"Be not offended, son of Adam, if I tell thee that the people of thy country bear no good reputation for Christian worship on either side of the Pale," said brother Virgil, anxious to learn how far the report of their savage condition was correct.

"The nations of the Pale are in marvellous ill report among us for violence and hypocrisy," replied Hugh Mor.

"But it is credibly affirmed," persisted brother Virgil, "that many on the borders of Claneboy and Kilultagh use neither the rite of baptism nor the service of the mass. Nay, I have heard it said further that the honourable estate of Christian wedlock hath fallen into general disuse amongst them."

"And if it be," replied Hugh Mor, "who are to bear the blame? Are they, these outlawed kindreds of men whom ye hunt like wolves with slot hounds from your borders, or the recreant priests who have deserted them in their need, that more deserve to be held in ill report?"

"Nay," said the Franciscan, "we could not be so reproached were it not that it is held to be more than a Christian priest's life were worth to venture amongst them."

"And how could it be otherwise?" retorted M'Adam: "the last of your people that I saw amongst us was the fat abbot of Bangor: he rode in a jock and scull, like any man-at-arms, with the Red Savage of Ards, and White from Dufferin. They preyed the country, length and breadth wise, from Bealfersad to Lough Neagh, and they spared none. He used I know not what incantations, to inflame his soldiery; but no day passed that women and children were not hunted down by the brutal churls, for the glory of their God, as they declared. That was the cause of the inroad, and he it was who planned and procured it. There, again, was the last prior of Carrick——"

"Nay, but," interrupted brother Virgil, finding his charges coming too near his own door, "these were not righteous or Christian priests, but violent and proud men, whose ministry is rather a blot and a disgrace to the Church. What I allege in our defence is, that the meek and pious servant of Jesus dare not venture amongst you; else this reproach would soon be removed from your land, and the souls of your people would no longer go to perdition as they do."

"If any man," said Hugh Mor, "be desirous of coming amongst us for the sake of instructing our kindreds in religion and civility, I will be his surety that he comes by no harm during his sojourn: but he must pledge me, word for word, that he will not discover the secrets of our strengths or passes to the other nation."

The Franciscan paused. Here was a virtual challenge, which he had himself provoked: if he refused it, with what conscience could he next approach the altar of that

God whose service he would thus have brought into inevitable contempt?—if he accepted it, to what danger and hardships might he not be exposed within a few hours? for he was now on the borders of the debateable country, and half-a-dozen miles' riding might bring him among the wildest of its inhabitants. "Son of Adam," at length he said, "if I could think that the other chief men of thy people were equally well-disposed with thyself, I would not shrink from the adventure; but how shall I be assured of protection or forbearance from thy equals or superiors into whose countries I may have need to go. The Tierna Mor of these nations, I am well assured, would sooner let one affected with the plague among his kindreds than a teacher of these mysteries. Would he who hath plundered forty churches, think you, permit a churchman to harbour among those whom he may lead to-morrow to the plunder of the one-and-fortieth? No: if I could have ample surety of protection from Mac Gillmore himself, I would accept the offer willingly; but, without that, son of Adam, it would be a blameable risk for one whose life is of any value in the church to make so rash a venture."

"And what surety at the hands of The Gillmore would satisfy you?" asked Hugh Mor.

"I know not of any sacramental tie over the conscience of a pagan," replied brother Virgil. "I shall rest satisfied with his word."

"You have it," said the stranger, sitting erect, and offering his hand. "I am Mac Gillmore."

"*Jesu Maria!*" exclaimed the astounded Franciscan, recoiling in amazement and consternation, "I am no better than a lost man!"

A slight shade of scorn passed over the large features of the outlaw, when he contemplated the effects of his avowal; but it soon gave place to a sad earnestness, both

of look and manner, as he addressed the agitated ecclesiastic. "Wherefore should you think yourself lost when a maimed man, whom you have aided in his helplessness, speaks to you without deceit? I owe you my life. I owe you more than was ever due to one of your nation by a man of my kindred till now—gratitude for kindness, and respect for acting in accordance with the charity you preach. I am here unable in any way to control you; you may, if you please, mount your mule, and leave me to await the arrival of those who would reward you for putting their bloodhounds on my track. You might, if you thought fit, avenge the wrongs, as they seem to you, of your nation by a single stroke of my own weapon: it lies beside you, and my breast is bare. But I know that you dare not do either. Think you, if I had seen you to be a man capable of abusing confidence, that I would have reposed it in you? You are terrified at the prospect of having to fulfil a dangerous engagement. I free you from the undertaking: it is in your own hand to come or go as you think fit. I will not conceal my expectation of assistance from you if you did accompany me across those hills to my own dwelling; and you cannot hide from yourself that, in that case, I should be bound to you by every tie that can secure the goodwill of man to man; so that you might preach to my people, if that privilege be indeed of the value that you seem to set on it, with as great security and honourable attention as though you were my own brother. I have done: you are free, without a helpless man's permission, to act as you please; but, take what course you may, I owe you, less or more, such gratitude as no man of your nation could ever claim at my hands till this day?"

"Gillmore," cried the good monk, greatly moved
"would to God thou wert a Christian!"

"If you can make me one, you shall have the opportunity," replied the outlaw.

The Franciscan looked round on every side in piteous irresolution, zeal and benevolence struggling with pardonable timidity, and pride contending against reluctant love of ease. He rose, and paced backward and forward; he clasped and unclasped his hands over his breast; at length, stopping short, he raised his eyes to heaven, and looked for assistance there. The outlaw contemplated the first workings of the good man's feelings with intense interest; but when he saw him at last sink on his knees, while the tears began to trickle from his eyes, he turned his head aside, partly from instinctive delicacy, and partly to conceal his own emotion: at length the Franciscan rose, his countenance beaming with pious resolution, "Chieftain," he said, "I am ready to accompany thee in truth and openness of heart. I will not betray the secrets of thy nation; and thou wilt give me license to depart and return when I desire."

"I give you my hand upon it," said Mac Gillmore; and the Franciscan no longer refused the offered pledge: tearing up a part of his cassock, he now bandaged the broken limb with such skill as he was master of, feeling ample reward in the relief which his aid immediately afforded; he then, with a mournful but sedulous care, packed up his little scrip, and strapped it behind his saddle, drew the girths, which he had loosened while his mule was grazing near them, and led her back once more to the side of the outlaw. It was not without great pain and difficulty, even aided as he was, that Mac Gillmore gained the saddle; and when he had mounted to the mule's back, he was obliged to rest his hand upon the monk's shoulder as he walked beside, to prevent himself from falling. Thus, leading and supporting the man who

had attempted his life scarce an hour before, brother Virgil went forth; a solitary but honest apostle of the faith which his own practice illustrated. Following the directions of Mac Gillmore, the monk led his mule back to the beaten track, which they pursued until they came to another rivulet. "Ah," said the outlaw, "it was here I should have taken to the hill; but the water was so low, that I passed it unawares; yet I have seen this brook when a man might not easily cross its channel without knowing where he trod." He then directed the Franciscan to turn to the right by a narrow track along the borders of the stream. Up this they held their course, until they came to a low growth of stunted oak, that filled a hollow of the mountain before them with apparently impassable underwood. "Whither now, son of Adam?" said the Franciscan, stopping short, as the path all at once became lost in front of this low rampart of leaves and branches.

"Push boldly through where you see the rowan berries hanging over the flat stone," replied Mac Gillmore; and the monk, leading his mule over a broad rock, which rose level with the turf before them, pushed aside the branches of oak and mountain-ash that half-concealed its surface, and found himself in a continuation of the path within the wood. "The scent does not lie on stone, and it shows no footmark," observed the outlaw; "but this is little to the precautions which you will find as our path approaches the main passes to my country." Accordingly, as they advanced into the bosom of the hills, their track became more intricate and difficult, now leading them up the channel of a stream, now carrying them on to the edge of an impassable quagmire, along the rocky verge of which they would have to toil knee-deep in water for an arrow flight before they could reach the true ford above

or below ; sometimes it was lost on the trackless common, and again borne through the heart of the black bogs, when a sudden turn would leave one unacquainted with the stratagem either foundered in the deep morass ahead, or satisfied that he had taken a false road. At length, about the middle of the afternoon, they rose into sight of the country beyond. "We are now upon Ben Madigan," said Mac Gillmore; but it must not be supposed that he spoke without the frequent interruptions and exclamations of pain which would naturally occur in the conversation of a man suffering under such severe bruises, although these accompaniments of all he said shall be here omitted—"We are now upon Ben Madigan: that hill which we have left behind is Collony Ward; beneath us, to the northward, you can see the Massey Mor of your own town: by the hand that was never christened, it is a strong and fair castle."

"Yonder, too," exclaimed the monk, "I see the white walls of my own priory. But, blessed Virgin! if my eyes do not deceive me, they are roofless! and, oh, holy and blessed Francis, what is this? There is a thin cloud of smoke hanging in the air above them, as though they had been fired overnight!"

"You have keen eyes if you can distinguish roof from sidewall at this distance," replied Mac Gillmore, calmly. "My own people sometimes call me the hawk of the hills for my sharp eyesight; yet I can see nothing of bare rafters or broken doors from here. The cloud in the air is the smoke from your town chimneys."

"Blessed be God, now that I look again, I believe, indeed, that's all!" exclaimed brother Virgil, greatly relieved; then, looking abroad over the landscape spread below, "Sweet Queen of heaven! it is surely a lovely sight. Yonder I see the hills of Scotland. Be

those the hills of the Scottish mainland or of the out isles?"

"They are the mountains over Glenapp, in Galloway," replied Gillmore; "I was over there when a boy, preying the Scots with O'Neill: we drove a good booty, and had the drowning of many Redshanks in Loch Ryan. By my hand, it is a brave prospect: those hills beyond the lough below us are Savage's country; yonder, on the main land, opposite the island, stands the Abbey of Bangor. If we had ascended a little higher, I would show you White's and Magennis's countries, and the Burgh's old castle of the ford."

"What," said the Franciscan, "shall we cross that high hill whose precipices we see from Carrickfergus between us and the south?"

"We are on it, even now," replied Mac Gillmore, "and just about to descend among the rocks you speak of." Their path had brought them to a sudden declivity, down which the monk was at first half afraid to venture; but being assured by the outlaw that there was sufficient footing, he descended slowly and carefully leading the mule. Just then a wild-looking man started up from among the rocks, and came running with looks and gestures of excessive joy towards them; but Hugh Mor made a sign to him, and he stopped short and crouched down again before the monk observed him. In the same manner he warned back two others who came forward to welcome him as he descended. As for brother Virgil, he did not raise his eyes from the path till he had brought his charge in safety to comparatively level ground; but when, at length, he looked up he was amazed beyond measure to find himself suddenly surrounded by scenery, the beauty and grandeur of which surpassed anything that his happiest effort of imagination could have pictured.

From the point where they stood, a colonnade of almost perpendicular rocks, rising in height as they retired, till they gained an altitude of many hundred feet, extended unbroken for a distance of a full half mile along the face of the mountain : it looked as if the whole brow of the hill had been hewn off, and scattered in fragments over its base. The ground below, thrown into grotesque undulations by the convulsion which had thus overlaid it with the ruins of the broken mountain, was clad with the tenderest verdure on all its slopes and hollows, where the long influence of the elements had wrapped the chaos underneath in a covering of vegetable mould, till the craggy mounds and riven abysses were smoothed into one continuous surface like the billows of a green sea heaving and subsiding round the base of the overhanging precipice. Below, the sides and foot of the mountain were wooded for miles down to the water's edge ; beyond, the tranquillough lay undisturbed by a single sail from forest to forest. The inverted image of the opposite hills, lighted by the declining sun, was brightly rendered back wherever the waters were themselves in the shadow, but where the level sunshine fell on the blue expanse, they glittered from shore to shore in one dazzling sheet of unmixed splendour. The pleased Franciscan could scarce confine his eyes to the path he was treading ; round and above him he gazed in increasing delight, for, as he advanced, the scene grew momentarily fairer and more magnificent ; the sultry labour of climbing in the sunshine was past, and they now moved down a grassy pathway in the cool shadow of the rocks ; the rocks at every step reared themselves in loftier grandeur above them—the green hollows and fantastic hillocks took more sweeping and picturesque outlines at each new succession of the series, till at last, surmounting a low knoll, they came

upon the brim of a verdant, bowl-shaped amphitheatre, in the centre of which the astonished monk beheld a numerous herd of cattle folded and penned, while men and women appeared running towards them from the doors of green booths on its side, and the ringing of hammers and dusk glow of fire-light from a wide-mouthed cavern in the base of the precipice above, announced that smiths were at work in the neighbouring recesses of the rock. "This is my dwelling," said the outlaw, "I bid you welcome to Corby-land, and make you a free denizen while you please to stay with us; I warned away my outposts as I came down, for I knew you would enjoy the surprise."

"And, gracious God!" cried the good monk, his heart failing within him at the thought, "can it be that this lovely spot is inhabited by heathens?"

"Not if you can make Christians of them," replied Mac Gillmore, "but your people have kept them in such heathenish training of late that I fear you will find them but ill-prepared to receive your doctrines." By this time they were surrounded by the multitude rushing forward in wild delight to welcome their chieftain. They were indeed a savage-looking people, some clad in skins, and some in rusted armour, bare-limbed and bare-headed for the most part, shaggy and weather-beaten. Wildly-attired women, and half-naked children joined the throng as they advanced; but the news that the chief was wounded, kept all at a due distance till he gained the door of his own booth. Here he was lifted from the saddle by two of the better sort of the men, and borne to bed in their arms. In the midst of this concourse and confusion, brother Virgil kept close to his protector; many were the glances of fierce surprise which he saw directed towards him! many and various the surmises which his presence

excited among the lookers on. "What brings the churl priest here?" cried one.

"The false shaveling is come to play the spy among us," exclaimed another.

"He is one of the accursed Minorites too," said a third; "I know him by his broad band and knotted cord; the Tierna has belike captured him upon the hill."

"And do you think Mac Gillmore would spare one of the Clan-Francisagh after last night's work?" demanded the second speaker incredulously.

"Who knows but the knave has wealthy friends who will give a round ransom?" was the reply.

The Franciscan heard no more, for the door of the booth was closed behind him as he entered, and he found himself in a rude apartment crowded by the heads of the clan and the chief's own attendants.

"Where is the Bantierna?" demanded Mac Gillmore, as they placed him on a low couch of heather, spread with mantles.

"She went with her maidens to watch for you at the low passes," replied one of the attendants, "and we have sent Donough Ghasta to warn her of your coming." While he spoke the door opened, and a female of considerable beauty, but pale and greatly agitated, entered the apartment. "Dearest Hugh," she exclaimed, hastening to his bedside, "where are you wounded? let me undo these bandages. Oh! thank God in His mercy that has sent you back to us at last!"

"That was not the exclamation of a heathen!" cried brother Virgil with involuntary enthusiasm, but the words spoken under his breath passed unnoticed by the anxious group around.

"I am hot and thirsty," cried Mac Gillmore, "some of you fetch me drink; the room wants air—leave me, my

friends ; and tell my people, Owen Mac Rory, to respect the person of the Minorite friar who brought me hither ; I owe him my life, Owen Grumach, and have sworn by sun and wind that he shall have no violence. Look to it that my oath is strictly kept ; lodge the good Christian in your own booth, and answer for his safety and honourable entertainment. Where has the Bantierna gone ? Give me more drink, and put another mantle over me, for I am at once thirsty and shivering ! ”

The Franciscan saw that fever was approaching, and would have advised the proper course to pursue, but there was no one there to listen to his suggestions ; the lady had suddenly retired to an inner apartment, and, before he could make his way to the chief's bedside, Owen Grumach, a grim and shaggy warrior as his name implied, had seized him by the arm and was leading him off with the other retiring bystanders.

Brother Virgil now found himself, with his new protector, the centre of an eager circle of questioners. How had he saved the Tierna's life ? whence was he coming ? whither was he going ? what surety had he given that he would not betray the secrets of the Muintir-Gillmore ? Some granted him credit for the service done their chief ; others viewed him with suspicions which they did not care to conceal.

“ Did the Tierna himself say that the Gilly-Francisagh had helped him out of peril,” said one incredulous old man.

“ He told me he had saved his life,” replied Owen Grumach ; “ but how or where he did not say ; he was under pain, and used as few words as he might.”

“ Till I hear it from his own lips, I cannot believe that it is in the nature of the Clanna-chriost to show mercy to one of our kindred after last night,” said the same grey savage.

"You have his word for it, and mine," replied Owen, "but let the Christian speak for himself; how could you, Gilly-Francisagh, find in your heart to spare one of the Muinter-Gillmore after the deeds they had done by you?"

The Franciscan's heart sank, for he remembered the smoke he had seen above his priory walls from the hill above. "Alas!" he cried, "I have not been with my brethren now for three weeks and more; I know not what may have happened them; I trust in God, my friends, you have done them no hurt."

"Come with me, and I will shew you what has happened to them," said Owen Grumach, with a smile of ominous import, and led the trembling ecclesiastic forward to the cave. The flame upon a forge hearth, and the white showers of sparks flying from a bar of hot iron on a smith's anvil in the midst, gave fitful but dazzling glimpses of the whole interior of the cavern. Here lay breastplates and iron helmets—spear heads and hatchets were scattered there—piles of lumber, horse-shoes, old bits and broken sword-blades crowded a third corner; but there was one object which caught and fixed the eye of the Franciscan at the first glance, it was the metal work of a church window; the stained glass still stuck here and there in the leaded intervals between the iron stauncheons, and at every heave of the bellows and stroke of the hammer, these fragments shone in the sudden light with a radiance like flashing gems; for it was propped against a bench between the anvil and the mouth of the cave, and shattered though it was, one could still trace some vestiges of the beautiful figures which had once adorned it. The Franciscan when he saw what it was, shook from head to foot with horror and vehement indignation. "Wretches," he exclaimed, regardless of safety in the anguish of his outraged feelings—"you have laid

your heathenish hands upon our beautiful stained oriel! you have torn down the sacred image of the blessed Francis! you have broken the bright picture of the virgin mother of God! may your souls be accursed for ever for this spiteful and devilish sacrilege! may hell rise up against you with flames and torments eternal, for this hateful and unutterable villainy! may the hands that did the abominable work rot! may the heart that prompted it be torn out and cast to the dogs! **may——**"

The outlaws had stood in silent amazement at first, at the energy of the pious brother's indignation, at what seemed to them no greater offence than any other violent destruction of a Christian's goods, but when they heard such horrible curses imprecated on them with all the sincerity of hate and abhorrence, they became enraged in turn, and but for the interference of Owen Grumach, who protected his ungrateful charge with anything but a good grace, for on his head the heaviest storm of the monk's denunciations had descended, brother Virgil might never have lifted up his voice against the world's wickedness again. As it was, his angry protector drew him forcibly away with one hand, while he repelled the most determined of his assailants with his drawn skein in the other, and so had brought him, not without great difficulty, about half way to his own booth, when a woman of the chief's household came with a message from the Bantierna to conduct the Christian priest to her apartment without delay. Boiling with pious indignation, brother Virgil was now eager to confront the leader of the sacrilegious band, to denounce him face to face—to defy him in the name of his outraged God—come what might he was above all consideration of the consequences; he was conscious of a courage he had never known before. Hitherto distinguished among friends for a gentleness of

manner, almost amounting to timidity, he now felt himself in the midst of enemies inspired with a sudden and intrepid anger which he doubted not was sent him from some higher source than his own timorous and forgiving heart. He entered the chief's booth with a firm step and severe aspect, determined to vindicate the honour and supremacy of his God against whatever power of violence or infidelity he should encounter. He had been conducted by another door to the Bantierna's own apartments; she came forth from the room in which the chief lay, the moment she heard his foot upon the floor. "Holy man," she exclaimed, approaching him with looks of eager supplication, "if you have any skill in medicine help me to save my husband!"

"Not though he were in the agony! not though a word of my mouth would save him from the pit!" cried the Franciscan.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the lady, "what has he done to offend you? why should you not show him the same charity now, you did an hour since?"

"Knowest thou the deed he did last night, woman?" cried the monk.

"Alas!" she replied, "I thought you had known of that unhappy exploit before."

"Never," he replied, "had I known of that sacrilegious villainy, he should have fattened the wolves of the mountain before I had aided him!"

The lady looked down in deep distress; "God knows," at length she said, "with what pangs it wrings my heart, to see the violent deeds of our people; but MacGillmore was first set upon; they had chased us out of Killultagh with blood-hounds and beagles; your own prior was the foremost in the foray; he had all the church vassals of Ards and Claneboy in arms against us. You know Mac

Gillmore makes no distinction among enemies; he deals with one as with another, and when he fired your priory in revenge of the slaughter of Altmore, he looked upon your walls, not as the house of God, but as the fortresses of his people's persecutors. But my husband lies on his death-bed if I get him no help! Oh, reverend father, forget your wrath against us - you saved his life thus far—do not abandon him to death now! our last man of knowledge in medicine, was slain four days since by your people; they hewed him to pieces while he was binding the wounds of his own child; but these wounds and bruises are beyond our skill to deal with, and, I see it by the wrapping of the bandages, that your hands are expert in healing; forget your wrath against us and save him—save him, for his soul is dark with unexpiated sins! oh, come with me and help me, and there is no reward too rich, no service too difficult for you to demand from us!"

"Woman," replied the Franciscan, "all the riches of Rome would not tempt me. Let the enemy of God and his saints perish, for me! Shall I restore fleetness to the foot that would soon again be foremost in the race of wickedness, or strength to the hand that only awaits returning power to lay the axe anew to our altars, or to hold another torch to the doors and roofs of God's remaining sanctuaries? No—let him die, for me!"

"Thou a Christian!" exclaimed the lady in passionate accents; "thou art no Christian! thou art no priest of peace, no teacher of charity! Oh remember, remember the lesson you would have others learn!" she continued, changing from invective to appeal; "think if this be not rather the cruelty of anger, than the severity of just resentment! think, I beseech you, of his people left without a head; of me"—and she burst into tears as she spoke—"of me and my little ones left alone among un-

bridled outlaws, without protection among them, or hope of being received back among my own indignant nation!" She sat down weeping bitterly, and the monk, considerably touched, but struggling to remain inexorable, was well satisfied to hear himself summoned from a scene which was beginning to be too much for his resolution, by the voice of Mac Gillmore himself from the inner apartment;—"Friar," cried the outlaw, "come hither. I would rather," he said, when brother Virgil had entered, and before the excited ecclesiastic had time to utter any reproach, "that this news had not come to your ears so soon, for I was desirous that you should have stayed with us a little longer. Had you known more of me, you would have been better prepared to do me justice. But since it has happened otherwise, be it so. I owe you my life, so far—and my debt shall be well paid; here Donough Ghasta, hand me the priest's drinking cups!"

The attendant took the two richly chased goblets with their salvers from an iron-strapped chest that stood at the bedhead; and brother Virgil could not repress a cry of mingled horror and astonishment, to see that they were the chalices of his own altar. But a more dreadful thought now crossed his mind. "Oh my poor brethren," he cried, bursting into tears, "I can well guess what has been your fate, when I see the spoils of the altar polluted by these pagans' hands—Mac Gillmore," he exclaimed passionately, "if you have shed the blood of one of Christ's servants, never look for mercy here, or hereafter!"

"They did not give me the opportunity," replied the outlaw with a ghastly smile; "they fled to the king's castle; else these goblets might have been filled with other blood than, I am told, you sometimes quaff from them."

"Blasphemer!" cried the Franciscan, "profane not

the holiest of our mysteries; if thou wouldst not have the lightning of heaven fall and consume thee, profane not that tremendous sacrifice!"

"Peace, friar," said Mac Gillmore, "I know little of your mysteries, nor is it my design to give you any just cause of offence. These cups which I took from your priory last night, I return to you—and, Donough, give the good man that golden crucifix also, which I had, last year, from the monks of Kells. Friar, you are now free to depart whence and where you will; you shall have guidance and protection to the borders of my country, on whichever side you please; I shall shift my camp to-morrow before sunrise, so that your knowledge of my retreat will be unavailing, should you think yourself bound to send the friends of your people against us. Is there aught else," he continued, when he saw the monk delaying, "that you would have and that is in my power to bestow?"

The monk's anger was rapidly abating; he had expected little else than reproach and violence; but to be restored to liberty, and loaded with gifts so highly valued, was a return for his denunciations such as he had not anticipated; he paused, but still unwilling to compromise what had seemed to him a holy indignation, he hesitated to admit how far he was already conciliated. "I know not whether there be among your spoils a shallow oaken box, strapped with brass, and having the figure of a crucifix in silver on the top," he said at length; "if so, I would willingly exchange all that thou hast given me for its precious contents; it holds the relics of the blessed Francis."

"Know ye such a box, Donough?" asked Mac Gillmore; the attendant brought it from a recess occupied by spoils of a meaner value; "take it," said the outlaw, motioning to the bearer to deliver it to the Franciscan,

"and may it be a prosperous possession ; I give it freely ; I ask nothing in return, but that you will speak justly of me and my people among your nation. If we have not among us these mysteries on which you set such a price, it is because the men who profess to teach them have abandoned us ; if we be cruel to others, it is because we have been cruelly treated by others ; but rude and rough-handed as we are, we still reverence our oaths, and discharge our obligations. You are the first man of your nation whom I have ever had to thank for kindness, or to honour for what my untaught mind tells me is piety ; I had wished to see you teach that among my people ; but we are none of us complete in our profession : the best armourer will leave a rivet loose, and the surest paced hobby will sometimes make a stumble—farewell ; this boy will guide you as you may desire."

"Mac Gillmore," said the Franciscan, laying down the revered plunder, and going over to the wounded man's bed-side, with a sudden impulse which he could not resist, although he had fearful doubts of its origin and instigation, "Swear to me that thou wilt never again raise thy hand against my holy order, either in their sacred persons, or in their temples of worship—swear that to me, and I will stay with thee, and tend thee with such skill as God hath vouchsafed me, and if I be overcharitable in what I offer, may God forgive me, for I mean the best !"

"Friar," replied the outlaw, "if a touch of your little finger would make me whole and sound as I was, this time yesterday, I would not buy your application of it, by consenting that any man should be free to injure me unpunished. If a wrong be done me I resent it, be the wrong-doer who he may. I ask not of your nation to exempt any kindred of my people from the chances and

usages of war ; and while we are at strife, no man whom I find warring against me shall go free of my resentment if I can reach him. Why should you be free from danger, while others, set on by you, are fighting at the sword's point ? ”

“ The ministers of peace should enjoy peace,” replied the Franciscan ; “ the teachers of mercy should have mercy shown them ! ”

“ Ye are ministers of neither peace nor mercy ! ” exclaimed the wounded man, sitting up with sudden energy ; “ what was the peace ye proclaimed at the high cross of Carrick, when you offered a hundred crowns for my head, and ten crowns for the head of any man or boy of the Muintir-Gillmore ? What was the mercy you showed in Altmore, when the weapons you had blessed spared neither old nor young, men nor women ? ”

“ Being rebels to both the church and the king, you are beyond the pale of mercy,” said brother Virgil ; “ had you come in and made satisfaction and submission, you would have had peace granted to you, and mercy shown you from the first.”

“ Ye are merciful to your own, and who is not ? ” cried Mac Gillmore scornfully ; “ but do you not teach from your altars to be merciful to all men ? ”

“ We are all children of the Church,” replied the Franciscan ; “ this world is her patrimony, and all therein is her's ; they are only her rebellious and ungrateful children that she chastiseth ; but her bosom is ever open to receive them back, and her hand is constantly stretched out to snatch them from perdition.”

“ And who is the king ? ” demanded the outlaw.

“ The king,” replied brother Virgil, “ is the chief servant of the Church, whom she hath appointed over you as a dispenser of good government and even justice ? ”

"I govern my own people," said Mac Gillmore, "and while I can prevent it, no other man shall; and if I be master here, I can see no reason why I should be servant to your prior at the rock, or to your chief priest, whom I have heard of, at Rome."

"But you ought, you ought," cried the Franciscan eagerly; "all men having power should be accountable for its use or abuse; and it is thus that kings and chieftains are accountable to the mother Church."

"And the Church to whom is she accountable?" said the outlaw.

"To God," replied the monk.

"And to God we are all accountable, without the intervention of either King or Church," cried Mac Gillmore with animation.

"Nay, then, if you grant that, I will not leave thee," cried brother Virgil, glad of any excuse for yielding to his own benevolence; and kneeling down by the outlaw's side, he betook himself at once to the readiest measure for his relief.

"Why, how now?" cried Mac Gillmore, "you mean to aid me after all? By the hand that was never christened, this is more than I had hoped for; ho, Mary *store ma chree*, come to me, and help the good Minorite."

"Now, Heaven be praised!" cried the lady, as she entered, and beheld the charitable monk busied about the wounded man.

"The first word I heard you speak, lady," said brother Virgil, looking up, "I said it was the voice of one who should have been a Christain."

The lady sighed deeply, but was silent. "Friar," said Mac Gillmore, "talk to me of my failings if you will, but do not afflict the Bantierna with idle recollections."

"Alas," exclaimed the Franciscan, "and can it be that she has fallen away from the faith of her people to——"

"Friar," interrupted the outlaw, "this lady must not hear reproaches; if I be not a Christian, it is not for want of her endeavours; if she has been unsuccessful in her endeavours, she has, at least, failed in an undertaking which no priest of your people till now has had the courage to attempt. For ten years of outlawry and hardship, she has been my stay and comfort in these deserts; striving daily to make me a better man, and failing only because the world would not allow it; aye, long and patiently you strove, Mary, to win me to gentleness and mercy, but it was not in the hearts of our enemies to leave me room for either. Reproach her not, friar, she has been an angel of goodness to me and to my nation, through the worst of troubles; she is a daughter of an honourable house; there is no stain of shame upon her; she is the mother of my children, and no man shall reproach her!"

"But I tell thee, Mac Gillmore," said the still undaunted monk, "that if she has fled out of the pale of the Church to live in concubinage with a heathen——"

"Thou liest, boddagh priest!" cried a boy of about eight years, who had entered while they were speaking, and had taken the lady's hand as he stood beside her, gazing with eager eyes upon the stranger: "my mother and the Gillmore were wed by a Lord Abbot—were you not, mother?"

"What, Harry a *vic machree*, are you there?" cried the outlaw, smiling through the darkness of his rising anger, "come to me and kiss me, a *lanna*; you are the true Gillmore over Ireland. Yes, my child," he continued, fondling the handsome boy, "we were wed by the priest, or

she had never come to the woods with me; and you, Harry, shall be wed by the priest too, if you like it, to the best lady of their nation; for when I make you the Tierna-Mor, my boy, you shall go down at the head of your kindred, and bear off lady and priest to boot, with leave asked of neither father nor bishop; but go and get me a drink now, Harry *dhas*, for I am hot and thirsty."

"Forgive me, lady," said the Franciscan, "had I known this at first, I should have been more ready to serve you; but Mac Gillmore is in need of present aid, and we have already wasted too much time in idle and heating discussion." The monk was right; Mac Gillmore's excitement had but hastened the impending disease; and, although they now did everything for him that care or kindness could suggest, he grew worse and worse, until, at noon next day, he lay in a high fever.

Brother Virgil had done all that his skill extended to, and as nature was now left to take her own course, he was at leisure to go abroad and observe more closely the manners of the strange people among whom it had been his hap thus to be cast. The scene was as charming as ever; turn his eyes which way he would nothing met them but picturesque or magnificent objects. The lough lay glittering before him like a mirror far below. The rocks rose behind him in a wall, like the towers and bastions of a giant's fortress, but, in casting up his eyes to the grey furrowed brow of the precipice immediately over head, he observed that the rude smithy in which he had been the night before was not its only cavern; two others were visible between it and the summit, the third and largest at a height fearful to look up to. Yet inaccessible as at first sight it appeared; the cave was tenanted, for the Franciscan saw a man standing in the wide archway. "It is our treasury," said Owen Grumach, who, much

conciliated by the monk's late services to the chief, again attended him; "we keep our stores and spoils there during troublesome times; the better part of your prior's treasure was sent up this morning."

"But how is it possible to get there?" asked the Franciscan; "the rock seems inaccessible as a bare wall."

"Yet there is no man of the Muintir-Gillmore, not bedridden, that could not climb to it blindfolded," replied Owen; "but the steps admit one only at a time, and a single man could keep it against the rising out of Ulster: it is a fast spot either for refuge or imprisonment."

"What, keep ye your captives yonder?" exclaimed the monk.

"When they are worth it, and the kindred is abroad," replied Owen drily; "we could not otherwise make sure of a hostage of price in our sudden marches."

"It is a fearful prison," said the monk; "methinks the dungeon itself were preferable. How horrible it must be to sit on that dizzy threshold, with the open world before you, and yet to feel that, one step back to life precipitates you into the abyss of death. If my body were confined, I should not wish my eyes to be at large: I would rather count the stones in my prison wall, than gaze at such a prospect as the captives in that high eyrie have sickened as they looked on many a sweet summer morning."

"Yes," said Owen Grumach, "many a long look I have seen Red Savage and his brother give across at their own country yonder, when the sun would be rising over the hills of Ards, and they sitting, as you say, with their legs hanging over the rock here on the brow of Ben Madigan. I was in that cave with them from new moon to half moon in the fourth change after: it was at the time that the kindred were preyed by Ever Magennis and the men of

Kilwarlin, when they had to fly into Massarene; and I and three others were left here to guard the treasure and the hostages."

"If your prisoners had been bold men, they might have thrown you from the doorway unwares, or overpowered you when asleep," said the monk; "it was a perilous charge to have them loose beside you in such an exposed post as that."

"Had we left them at liberty to do as you say," replied the outlaw, "it would have been a dangerous service, indeed, with such men as the two sons of the Seneschal; but look again, and you will see that the cave has two entrances: it is double, and the farther one alone is accessible: we gave them the near end to themselves; for there is a strong door between. They needed neither fetter nor staple after they were once twisted up: and yet the world, as you say, was before them, and they might walk forth into the midst of it if they had a mind."

"It was a cruel, though surely an illjudged device," said the monk; "but these captive gentlemen; were they ransomed at last?"

"What! have you not heard of the deeds of the Mac Seneschals?" cried the outlaw; "Alan Duff is now the terror of our people. The death of Raymond Roe resounded over all Ulster, from Lough Cor to Lough Neagh."

"What! was the son of the Seneschal that chieftain of the Ards, whom I have heard, Mac Gillmore murdered, after taking a thousand marks for his ransom?"

"Mac Gillmore slew him in fair fight," replied Owen Grumach; "and although the churls have it that he waylaid him on his return to his people, and set upon him with superior force, I know, for I saw it, that it was not till Red Raymond drew his skene and flung it at his face,

that Hugh Mor would take to his weapon. It was a deadly quarrel this, and since nothing but the death of one or other would end it, why, better that the ransom money should be forfeited than that Mac Gillmore should be slain; but Alan Duff says he believes the other story, and has sworn to have *his* blood," pointing to the chief's booth, "meet him where he may: he swore it by sun and wind upon the broad stones of Ballylessan."

"*Jesu Maria*, is the son of the Seneschal, a pagan too!" exclaimed the Franciscan.

"No, he is of the Kinel-Chriost, like yourself," replied Owen Grumach; "but 'tis little dread we of the hill would have of any other oath than the one I tell you; besides, Black Alan could not have sworn by the gods of your nation, for his oath was, that neither cross nor cell, church nor altar, should be sanctuary to Mac Gillmore on the day when he should lay hands on him. He has pursued us bitterly ever since: what with his feud and the forays of your people, we have had neither ease nor rest this three moons back. By the hand that was never christened, I would rather than all the cattle between this and Mourne, that I had pitched him over, that day when he tried to push past me to the ladder head, as I could have done, so sure as there is spoil in Bangor, but for that fool Donough who held back my arm."

"Thank God rather that sent one to keep thy hand from doing murder," said the monk; "he would have been dashed into a thousand pieces ere he had reached half-way to the bottom."

"And if I could dash him into twice ten thousand pieces, would it not be the better service to my nation?" demanded the outlaw.

"It would surely be a great disservice to your own

soul," replied the monk, fondly expecting to make some religious impression on his savage attendant.

"What! could a man be blamed for knocking his prisoner on the head, and he trying to escape?" cried Owen Grumach.

"It becomes not us, who are ourselves prisoners in the bonds of Satan, to be over harsh with those who would escape out of our own chains," replied brother Virgil.

"What do you mean, Gilly Francisagh?" asked the outlaw; "are you not free to depart when you will? as for me I am bound to him in gossipred, but not otherwise."

"Thou art ignorant; thou art ignorant," said the disappointed Franciscan; yet, unwilling to abandon his first attempt so soon, he added, "I spoke not of an earthly thralldom; but of a bondage worse than that of caves or dungeons; yet the captives of that prison have been ransomed by the free bounty of a Redeemer, who asks but that they shall believe in him to be restored to liberty and life eternal."

"I'd rather trust to the thousand marks," replied the savage with a grin.

The monk hardly repressing an indignant rebuke, abandoned his attempt for the present with a sigh, and recurring to the subject of the feud with the Mac Seneschals, asked his rude guide, "was there no other cause of anger, besides the death of his brother, between Black Alan and Mac Gillmore: the oath he swore would, methinks, need some still greater cause of hatred even between savages."

Owen Grumach looked towards the chief's booth, and placed his finger on his lips; "if you would be friends with *him*," he said, "be satisfied with the cause I have told you:" then, changing the subject with natural readiness, he asked, "Do you know yet why it was that Mac Gillmore drew his skene upon you yesterday in the glen?"

"No," replied the Franciscan; "now that we are friends, I had forgotten to ask; but I suppose it was because he took me for one of the brotherhood in pursuit."

"Just so," replied Owen; "and no wonder that he looked for little good at your hands, for he had left a bare plot of ground behind him at Saint Francis of the rock: we pulled the prior's house clean down: it would have made you laugh to have seen the bare legged friars scudding down the high street with their books and strong boxes under their arms. I'll warrant, though, they left their knotted cords in the blaze; there will be no more scourging of backs there for another twelve-month—hand of my body, but we gave them the day's true penance for ever!"

"Thou art a shameless and a blasphemous man," said brother Virgil; "but I forgive thee on the score of thy brutish ignorance. Yet if thou hadst eyes to see or heart to understand, thou mightest profit, even uninstructed as thou art, by the example made of thy sacrilegious master. He laid his violent hands on God's servants and God has cast him down in return; so that it is doubtful whether he shall ever rise again."

"Had he got the fall, first," said Owen, "it would have shown God's regard for Saint Francis a deal better: there was little use in breaking his bones after the mischief was done."

"Gracious Providence!" exclaimed the monk, "must I hear Thy ways thus called in question by a savage? It is but wasting the words of instruction to bestow them on him. Grim son of Rory, lead me again to your smithy, for I would preserve as much of the precious adornments of our oriel as your plundering hands have left unbroken."

"If it be the coloured glass you mean," replied the outlaw, "you need not look for it now : it was ground to shivers in tearing the bars asunder for the forge."

"*Jesu Maria*," cried the unhappy monk ; "and is that beautiful and costly frame-work, that came across the seas at such a charge, already broken up and torn asunder by your smiths ?"

"It is in three score pike heads before now," replied Owen Grumach.

"Holy and blessed Francis, hear me," cried brother Virgil, raising his hands to heaven ; "grant that the weapons to which the plunder of thy servants has been converted may yet be turned upon the spoilers of thy sanctuary ! grant that those who robbed thy servants of their shelter may yet be left with as little shelter or protection from their own enemies."

"What," cried Owen, "are you at cursing us again, Gilly Francisagh ? Take warning that if the kindred hear you a second time, I may not be able to keep their skenes from your throat."

"May God forgive me if I have indulged in unchristian anger," exclaimed the Franciscan ; "but the curse rose to my lips upon an impulse which I feel to be little less than divine." Just then a messenger came to summon the monk back to the Bantierna's apartment.

"I shall tell you the remainder to-morrow night, my princes," said Turlogh ; "if I were to begin the lady's story to-night, it would trench on our hours of rest."

FIFTH NIGHT.

"WHERE did I leave off, my prince," said the bard, addressing Art next night, as the captives closed their little circle round the fire.

"You left brother Virgil on his way to the Mac Gillmore's booth on Ben Madigan," replied O'Neill; "the lady has just sent to desire his attendance."

"Yes, my prince, I remember now it was so," replied Turlogh, "but I had been thinking of the pleasant days I used to spend about the same green hollows, and down upon the banks of the White Well, or round the crags and heathery bank of the hill, 'till I had quite forgotten the adventures of both monk and outlaw in my own. God be with the time, for it will never come again! They are scattered and sorely changed, now, that used to gather the wild strawberries with me in the Fairy Well Meadows—some under sorrow, and some dead. The tears are in my eyes when I think of these dewy slopes of daisies, and the bright faces that I have seen shining over them:—Oh! the light echoes of my brother's laughter among the hanging banks! the clear call of my sweet-voiced sister hiding in the hazel grove! Oh, for the heart that was in my bosom then, when I had no care nor foresight of trouble, but all the world, wherever I went, was a garden of wonder and romantic dreams!" The old man paused, and looked up, till the tears that were glistening under his eyelids had sunk back again to their source; "yet, blessed be God," he then said, when his voice had recovered its firmness, "we still can fancy new fortunes for others, let our own dreams be read as crossly as they may."

"Ay, Turlogh," said Art, "I never thought that this

could have been the doom of my youth ;” and he cast a mournful glance round their prison walls ; “ but, thank Heaven, I can sometimes think myself on the open field still ; let fate read our past dreams as she will ; while fancy is free to take refuge in the future, I will dream on faster than she can overtake me.”

“ It is the last privilege of misfortune,” said Henry ; “ God pity those in trouble who can look only to the present ! ”

“ He is the best man who looks to all,” said Hugh, “ we could do little for ourselves in present peril, without considering the experience of the past, and the chances of the future.”

“ We are all agreed, then,” cried Art ; “ we are sad now, thinking of our captivity ; we were pleased last night, forgetting it in the recital of this good Franciscan’s adventures among the outlaws of Claneboy ; ’tis likely we should be pleased again by hearing more of the same story ; so we will meet our present peril of sadness by trying the cure that has been before successful.”

“ Well, argued, my prince,” cried the bard ; “ and in obedience to so conclusive a sentence, I shall proceed.” He then took up his half-finished tale of

CORBY MAC GILLMORE.

PART SECOND.

BROTHER VIRGIL was again divided between pious indignation and humane charity. The recent excitement under which he had imprecated the vengeance of his dishonoured saint upon the spoilers of his sanctuary, still filled his heart with angry agitation; but natural pity, and a certain sense of obligation, as well as of dependence, struggled powerfully in the better cause. Perhaps, too, there might have been another motive at work. There was, indeed, the pardonable pride of some self-sacrifice in a good cause; the gratifying thought that, humble as he hitherto had been among the members of the brotherhood, even he might yet be destined to the achievement of some good service to the Church. "What,"—he could not help thinking, as he walked slowly down towards the booth of the wounded outlaw—"what if I should indeed succeed in reclaiming some of these benighted outcasts? Why, if I could but sow such seed among them as would yield a good harvest, even fifty years hence, it would surely be a blessed work. I should be the first to have ventured among them, or to have preached among them: no man could deny that. They have been the scandal of Christendom now for nigh three generations, and surely the man who wipes that blot off the character of the Church, would not be soon or easily forgotten. Holy and blessed Francis! to think what I might be yet! And it is neither impossible nor unlikely—many a man has been canonized for less: and, Oh! blessed Virgin, to think of poor Fergall Mac Naughten being one day *Sanctus Virgilius*!"—But, conscious of an unworthy ambition thus overcoming purer

motives which he would fain have recognised alone at his heart, the good brother recalled his fancy from her flight, and sought to fix his mind solely on the course sanctioned by strict duty and disinterested zeal in the service of religion.

But imagination, once let loose, was not easily to be withheld from the premeditated excursion. "Nay," said brother Virgil, "this is a work of charity and love, which I would do, and which I would be bound to do, even though the world were never to know that I had existed. If I saw a traveller who had fallen into a pit, would I not aid him out, in the wilderness as readily as in the gaze of a thousand men? And this miserable people, entrapped as they are in Satan's deepest pitfall, shall I make a merit of reaching out the Church's saving hand to them, because there are none to order or applaud the charitable service? My heart should rather be filled with gratitude for such an opportunity of doing my duty with voluntary good will, instead of being thus puffed up with vain dreams of honours that I can never gain by adequate deservings—and oh, that my humble efforts may be availing! Renowned or unknown, let my endeavours be but auspicious! What a blessed change these miserable men would find it! What a blessed sight it would be for me to see! Already methinks I can see the repentant heathen casting away his bloody sword, to clasp the cross of his salvation; already I can hear the glad voice of thanksgiving ascending from the peaceful dwellings of man no more at strife, and no longer in trouble. I see these wild woods, now the refuge of the wolf, yielding to the fair green fields of a civilized and prosperous people: the prayers of the faithful rising from many a spire half hidden among sheltering trees; the answering dews of heaven filling the sweet food on the stalks of an hundred corn fields. The

hum of cheerful labour sounds from the populous city like the message of the summer beehive: ships come and go over the broad bosom of the waters with the breath of favouring heaven in their sails:—Blessed be God! see how the brown husbandman sets apart his tenth sheaf to the holy Francis!—how the grateful merchant solicits our smiling cellarer with the richest hogshead of his safe-landed cargo!—well may the good prior, walking in his cool cloisters, exclaim to the attendant brotherhood, ‘*Deus nobis hæc otia fecit*;’—‘and who,’ the smiling monk beside will ask, ‘who, under God, was the chosen instrument of this blessed change?’ ‘He was an humble brother of the order,’ the prior will reply, ‘a poor servant of the blessed Francis, like ourselves. Fergall, the son of Naughten,’ he will say, ‘was the man who first went forth into that howling wilderness. This fair country,’ he will tell them, ‘was then overrun with forests and morasses; these pleasant grazing parks of our cattle were the resort of wild and savage animals; these fruitful corn fields nothing but a tangled growth of furze and trackless thickets; nettles and briars covered all the sunny slopes where our trim gardens now scent the dewy air with thyme and rosemary, and the heathen people who won their casual subsistence from the wild roots and crude berries of that thorny desert, were as rough and uncultivated as the inhospitable scenes amid which they lived. But the mild apostle of peace went forth among them alone in the strength of truth, and the confidence of duty:—yes,’ he will say, ‘it was the humble Fergall, now known in our calendar as *Virgilius de Rupe*——’”

“The Bantierna awaits you, *Gilly F'ancisagh*,” said some one plucking the good friar by the sleeve, and brother Virgil, awakening from his dream of pious ambition, perceived, with some confusion, that he had uncon-

sciously stopped mid-way upon the path leading to the lady's habitation. "I come, my friend, I come," he said, opening his eyes with some regret on the realities around him, while visions of chapels and altars to Saint Virgil of the Rock, and all the bright pictures of peace and plenty which he had been drawing a moment before, went floating away from before his imagination, like the scattered clouds of a bright sunset.

It was Owen Grumagh who had interrupted his reverie; and the recollection of that rude heathen's late success in foiling his first efforts at converting him, considerably damped the ardour which these bright hopes had kindled. He accordingly took his way to the booth of the outlaw, much less zealously disposed for immediate controversy than on first receiving the lady's commands to attend her.

The lady was waiting him in her own apartment. "Thanks to your charity, my father," she said, as the monk entered, "Mac Gillmore is now much easier than we could have hoped, and I have taken the first moment I could be spared from his side, to thank you for the aid you have rendered us. I would, besides, entreat you to sit and talk with me; for it is long since I had the opportunity of speaking with a priest before; and, holy father, lost as you think me in wickedness and ignorance, I am no heathen;—God forbid!"

"Daughter," said the Franciscan, taking his seat on a low boss of rushes by her side, "thine must be a strange history: I would fain hear it from the beginning, for, otherwise I could not judge how far thou hast sinned against thy soul in voluntarily dwelling so long among this heathenish people."

"I have sinned grievously in what I did; I confess it," said the lady, "yet, holy father, when you hear my story, you will not say my fault has been solely without excuse.

I will hasten and tell you all, for I know not when I may have such an opportunity again—alas! many a time I thought I would die unshriven like the poor pagans around me—but, blessed be God, who has sent you here at last! for I feel that if I had this burthen lifted from my heart, I could die contented—what I never looked to do before to-day!”

“Proceed, then, my daughter,” said the monk; “who wert thou before the Gillmore wedded thee? Where dwell thy people? Hast thou father or brother alive? Tell me all, freely, and trust me, we shall find a remedy for thy distresses, and a certain pardon for thy faults.”

“Your question wrings my heart with anguish,” said the lady, looking down in painful embarrassment; “but I will answer it. I am daughter of the Seneschal of Ards.”

“God help thee!” exclaimed the benevolent man, clasping his hands together, in sudden agitation; “it is little wonder that thou art a wretched woman.”

“You have heard, then, of our—our sad history?” she inquired, timidly raising her eyes to his face.

“Enough to make me shudder when I hear what thou hast now told me,” he replied; “art thou not the sister of those two chieftains who were once imprisoned in these caverns?” The lady again cast down her eyes, and sank her head in silence before her questioner. “Yes,” he continued, “it is little wonder that thou art most wretched. I have heard of their fate, and have seen enough of thy condition here to feel strong compassion for thee; stronger, I fear, than thy faults and follies have deserved, for—for a daughter of thy nation to fall away to the heathens, even so far as thou hast done is in itself a sin not easily forgiven.”

“Father,” said the lady, “when I left my people I had

little knowledge of the wild race among whom I was coming."

"Then why not leave these pagan kindreds when thou wast better informed of their barbarity and ungodliness?" demanded brother Virgil.

The lady pressed her hand below her breast; "I had not been long with the Clan Gillmore," she said, "till I had other ties to bind me to them."

"Nay," said the Franciscan, "I would not have thee leave thy husband, if he be, as thou sayest, bound to thee in Christian wedlock; but I would have had thee separate him from his savage associates, and bring him back with thee to the bosom of the Church, and the protection of the law."

"You know little of Hugh Mor," she replied, "if you think that the persuasion of either wife or child could make him desert the kindred: the poorest and meanest of the name is dearer to him than his own heart's blood."

"Then would I have had thee use thine influence with him and his people, for their conversion and instruction in civility and honest life," said brother Virgil.

"I have tried and failed," was the lady's answer.

"And Heaven only knows whether I may not fail also!" exclaimed the good monk, "for an ignorant and blasphemous people they be to deal withal, and I little marvel at thine ill success amongst them."

"But surely Heaven will grant a better end to your labours than to mine," said the lady, "for what could I expect who had neither learning nor holy calling, nor the gift of speech to tell their true condition to them, as you, my father, have done since you came hither."

"Alas!" cried the good brother, "I have done nothing! They are even as deaf adders to my words. Of such brutish beings as the son of Rory, and the

blacksmiths of the cave, I have indeed no hope—none : they are worse than the beasts : stocks and stones are intelligent in comparison with them : but with the Gillmore himself, I do trust that I shall yet have some success. He seems of a more humane understanding than one might naturally look for from the savage life he leads ; and I do marvel, in truth, that thou hast made no impression on such a mind ; for he is of a discreet and reasonable judgment in many things, and I have observed in his conversation certain glimpses, as it were, of a natural piety that bespeak a heart not altogether estranged from the love of charity and justice. Still he is, notwithstanding all this, a very uninstructed pagan.”

“O ! if you knew him,” cried the lady, with the animation of affectionate pride, “you would say that his are more than glimpses of natural piety. If you knew his wisdom in the government of his people, his valour in war, his tenderness and gentleness with his own, you would then feel how worthy he is indeed of all that can be done to save and succour him.”

“I doubt it not, I doubt it not,” said brother Virgil, carried away for a moment by the earnestness of the lady’s manner : but, suddenly recollecting himself—“My God ! what do I say ?” he exclaimed ; “I doubt not, indeed, that it would be a good deed to save him, firebrand though he is, from the burning ; but when I remember what he has done, it is too much to ask me, who am myself unworthy, to assent to his worthiness of God’s unpurchasable mercy.”

“Let him be as unworthy as you will, only be the minister of that mercy to him, and I shall be contented and thankful,” said the lady with submissive gentleness.

The good brother did not need much persuasion to restore him to his natural benevolence. “Surely I will administer such help and consolation to him as in me

lies," he said ; "but, meanwhile, daughter, we can do nothing more for him till it pleases Heaven to carry his disease to a crisis. Proceed, then, and let me not again interrupt thee in thy story ; for thine is a tale that I long to hear."

The lady, thus exhorted, drew her robe closer round her, and in modest and tremulous accents proceeded to narrate her history.

"I have told you, holy father," she said, "that I am the unfortunate sister of the great Mac Seneschal. My father lived in a strong castle over Dundonald ; you can see the hill from the door. May the Queen of Heaven pity me ! Look which way I will, I behold nothing but the scenes of my shame or my misery ; for if I look up, there is the cave where Mac Gillmore kept my brother Raymond till his beard was grown over the collar of his hauberk ; and if I look down, there are the fair hills of Ards and Castlereagh, where I once roamed through the green woods and meadows, innocent and happy, as I was then, and as I am never to be again !"

The lady paused, and wiped away a tear ; then, with a heavy sigh, proceeded.

"We were two brothers and myself, and we spent a happy childhood ; but my mother died while we were all young, and my father was slain in an ambush by the wild Irish, while my brothers were still youths, and I a girl just rising into womanhood. Raymond and Alan were unlike in character as in their looks. Raymond was open and fiery, but kind and tender-hearted ; Alan, black as his own brow, proud, revengeful and turbulent. They had both been wild hunters and rangers of the woods before my father's death ; but when the kindred rose to avenge his murder, they took to the wars as if they had been bred to nothing but blood and plunder. Fierce and terrible warriors they grew, above all others of

their age in Ulster. Many a creaght they plundered, many a strong castle they broke and burned, while their cheeks were yet beardless as my own. All the Irish of Kilwarlin and Claneboy stood in error of them; for they scarce spent one day in twenty within their own walls, but were almost constantly in the field, burning and preying.

"The kindred had been bold and warlike in my father's time; but under Raymond and Alan they became quite as fierce and cruel as the barbarous clans they had to contend with. It used to shock my soul to hear the tales of slaughter and devastation which they would bring home with them from their ravages. I could urge mercy on Raymond, and sometimes for my sake he was merciful; but with Alan I never yet prevailed to save a grey hair from the sword, or a widow's cow from the driving. I was glad when they left me alone, even while I shuddered to think of the work they were engaged on. I could then forget the tumults and distresses of a life of violence in the quiet lawns and woods about our own castle; for there we were far removed from danger, and friends were at hand, if danger had come nigh us. I was young, father; and worn as I am to-day with hardship and suffering, I was then not unworthy to be called the daughter of Margery Ghal Ni' Niel; my heart was young and ardent, and I longed, as I roamed the green meadows, for some one better able to share its fresh affections than the maidens with whom I spent the idle mornings, vaguely dreaming as we sang the songs of true lovers, or listened to the tales of ladies and their knights.

"Well, father, one evening before sunset, as I sat alone in a haunt that I loved dearly—it was a mossy grotto in the bank of a little stream that ran hard by the bawn of the castle—I saw a strange hunter coming

down the glen with his dogs. He carried a bow and a hunting-spear, and had a sheaf of arrows stuck in his belt, and his dogs were the goodliest I ever saw. But, father, he was himself, I thought, by far the goodliest man I ever saw, and by my troth I think so still ; for, broken, as he lies within, Mac Gillmore is still the best man of his name, and they are the tallest kindred men in Ulster at this day. It was there I saw him first, father ; but we did not speak that evening. He came back again the next night and spoke to me, and I talked to him till after sunset. I had no thought of harm in what I did ; but I told no one when I came home, only hurried to my bed and thought myself almost happy at last. He came again, evening after evening, and as often as he came I was there to meet him. He told me he was of the clan Rory—and true it was, for his mother's people were of the blood of Kilwarlin—and that he had not been with his kindred since the month before, but was on a hunting expedition, with ten comrades only, in the woods. I asked no more ; for whatever he told me I was satisfied with it. A happy life I had, until we parted for that time ; for he told me one evening that he must follow the roe-deer into Dufferin, but promised to come back in four days. I came home that evening with a sadder heart than I can tell you.

“But I was doomed to have cause for worse trouble than the grief of a foolish girl longing for her lover's return. The kindred had been abroad for twenty days, and they came back that very night. They had been defeated in battle with the wild Irish, and had lost all their prisoners and a great prey of cattle at the fords. Raymond was wounded, and two of our fosterers killed, and Alan was wild with rage and grief. They had been set upon by our old enemies, the clan Gilmore. Father, think what a story it was for me to hear, when they told

me that Hugh Oge, the Gillmore's youngest son who had headed his people in battle, had been twice seen hunting within a mile of our castle only three days before! Alan had heard it from a ranger of the abbot of Bangor, who had encountered him. He described him as he had seen him in the fight—tall, dark, some three or four years his senior, wearing a belt set with studs of silver, and swift of foot as a red deer. Who had seen him? It was at the head of the glen the ranger had met him. Who had been in the glen of late? Had I seen any stranger there or in the wood? He questioned me so fiercely that for a moment I thought he must have known all. But I denied it; I could not have confessed it when I heard his story; for I was now sure that my lover was no other than the young Mac Gillmore: and, father, I did not tell you at the time, but, you will, I think, feel some compassion for me when I tell you now, that this kindred, this Muintir Gillmore—I will tell you presently, when this choking in the throat leaves me:—they were the same wild Irish of whom I told you; they were the same clan who slew the Seneschal. But, father, do not think that Hugh had any part in his death. No; bad as I am you need not shudder at the suspicion that I am wedded to my father's murderer! Oh, no! Hugh was then in Dufferin, preying the Whites under their own walls of Killileagh; it was Adam Garv Mac Gillmore, the old chief, his father who had laid the ambush. The Seneschal had hanged two of the kindred, who were found hunting within his bounds, and Adam had sworn by the sun and wind to revenge them. Three times they came down with the whole strength of the clan, and thrice we beat them off: but, after the oath he had sworn, Adam Garv would not rest till he had fulfilled it. So, hearing by a spy that the Seneschal was gone

to Carrickfergus to meet his cousin, the prior of Muckamore, he laid an ambush of ten men in the wood beyond the fords of Lagan, and after lying in wait two nights and a day, accomplished his purpose. My father and his cousin were both slain by arrows as they rode at the head of their company ; and so swift of foot were the Gillmores, that the mounted men at arms who guarded the Seneschal, were unable to come up with them on the broken ground ; so that Adam and his fosterers escaped. I had heard strange and dreadful reports of the Muintir Gillmore, as was natural among a family that has experienced such a loss at their hands. The two poor wretches whom my father had first put to death, were said to have been no better than pagans, having died without once calling on God or the saints ; and it was now affirmed that the whole clan were utter heathens. I had never thought of the clan Gillmore without a shudder ; I had fancied them a race of such beings as I had heard of under the name of wild men of the woods ; and, in truth, with regard to the kindred at large, my fancy did not much deceive me ; but when I became certain that Hugh was of the clan, a wonderful change came over my mind.

“Sore, sore I strove against it ; long I strove to cherish horror where my breast would admit love only ; for horror of Hugh Oge my heart could not conceive. When I would try to paint him bloody, fierce, exulting over my dead kinsman, as I thought that duty should have shown him to my eyes, I could see nothing but the picture of the beautiful, swift, eagle-eyed young hunter : his eyes haunted me in the dark ; his voice was sounding sweetly in my ears, though Alan should be raging against our father’s murderers at my side. Night and day I struggled, though for the first I felt that love would triumph in the end ; and at length

love did triumph, and I found myself on the evening of the fourth day watching for the swift footsteps of him whom I dared scarcely trust myself to think of on the first. The kindred were again gone ; Raymond was recovered, and had taken the field with his brother. I was once more alone, and I could resist no longer ; so I had stolen out to the head of the glen ; trembling at the prospect of seeing my hopes fulfilled, yet satisfied that all my former horror had been prejudice, and that all my present weakness was the work of charity.

He came. Oh, father, I cannot describe that meeting ! He was wounded and bleeding, his dress torn and disordered ; for he had travelled since mid-day through the wildest woods in Ulster. He had been wounded, he said, at first in a dispute with the hunters of Kinelearty. Alas ! he little thought what I knew when he said so. I was glad, father, that he was wounded, though Heaven knows how willingly I would have borne the pain for him ; but I was glad to have the respite even of dressing my lover's wound before I should have to tell him that I knew him. I had finished my task ; but I could not say the word that should separate us ; Mac Gillmore saw my distress ; he cast himself at my feet, he told me he had deceived me, that he too had come to confess, but that his heart at first had failed him also. I, too, acknowledged all ; I know not what I said, but I did not reproach him. He was full of joy and gratitude ; he told me that his kindred were gone from the pastures they had occupied, and out of reach of our arms ; that they were satisfied with the recovery of their herds, and would prosecute the feud no further, if allowed to remain in their territory undisturbed. He told me, too, that he had spared Raymond's life, for my sake, at the fords ; for that he had passed him when he was down in the fray, and be-

stowed the death-blow that might have rid his kindred of their cruellest enemy, upon another. He said he must join his clan at their place of muster before day-break, but that he would have a token left for me when his return might be looked for. And then he asked me if I would go to the woods with him, and be a hunter's bride as soon as he could find a territory of his own where we could live apart from his kindred, as they were at feud with my people? I could not have said 'yes' that evening, for all the wealth of Ireland; I could only weep and pray for happier times: but I promised to meet him again; and when we parted, I felt more alone in the world than ever. I had not consented to his entreaties that I would go to the woods with him; but when left alone, I did little else than imagine pictures of the sylvan home he had promised me. You may be sure, father, that the woods were always green, and the glades for ever sunny in my dreams. There was no image there of leafless branches howling in the sleet, as I have heard them since, the length of many a dismal night; no thorny brakes, dripping with chill dews; no picture of desert marshes, weltering in the noisome vapours of summer, or of sedgy river banks cutting the bare feet with their sharp blades in December. I had little thought of the life I was to lead then; and yet, father, hard as my lot has been, I have had such happiness as true love alone can give; and if I could but see those dear to me brought to a knowledge of holiness and peace, I should be happier than many a lady who never walked the dew. Oh! on the bare earth let me lie while I live, if I could but see that blessed day!"

"Thou shalt see it yet, please God, my daughter," said the good Franciscan: "but go on, I pray thee, with this strange story of thine."

"From what I have told you," said the lady, "you will easily divine the rest. Hugh's token came to me in little more than a week from that time; and I met him in the wood where we had appointed. He told me he had left the kindred for my sake; that he had found vacant pastures in Claneboy, and built a hunting booth in a delightful valley for our home! that none but his two foster brothers and their wives would be with us, and that all the wood-rangers in Ulster might search for ever without finding our retreat. Horses were at hand, mantles and disguises prepared; and the priest, he told me, was waiting in the woods. He wrapped me in a mantle, and I was on horseback before him ere I fully realized what I had done. I would fain have had more time to reflect; but Hugh had said that my brothers were already on their march homeward, and that if Alan were once returned I need never hope to be allowed the chance of seeing him again. It was vain to lament; and in all my shame when I thought of my unmaidenlike conduct, and amid all my real grief at leaving my home and kindred behind me, I confess, father, that I was better satisfied in my heart than I would have been had Hugh yielded to my entreaties, and left me as I prayed he would.

"We rode through the woods till after midnight: what path we took I knew not, but when we had travelled a long way, we saw a light before us among the trees. Here we found a party of wilder-looking men than I had seen before, around a great fire. They seemed to have had as long a journey as ourselves, for their horses, where they stood tied to the trees, were covered with foam and reeking in the bright fire-light. I thought he must be a friendly priest who had ridden so hard at that dead hour of night to such a spot, on such a service. But I was still more amazed to see

that it was not an ordinary priest that was awaiting us. I knew him by his robes to be a dignitary of the Church ; and, holy father, judge of my consternation when on approaching nearer, I beheld the Lord Abbot of Bangor, bareheaded, his dress torn, and his whole person exhibiting signs of violence, and evidently a prisoner. In reply to my exclamations of horror and amazement, Hugh told me he could not otherwise get the service of a priest ; for that his people were under the displeasure of the Church, in consequence of the murder of the prior of Muckamore. It was then, for the first time, that I felt the bitterness of real remorse. Oh, what I would have given to have been back with my brothers ! But it was now too late. Hugh lifted me to the ground. The women who were there supported me. The Abbot was dragged forward : Owen Grumach on one side, and a fosterer of Mac Gillmore, since slain, on the other ; both with drawn weapons and savage threatening aspects. The Abbot was so hoarse that he could scarcely speak. He had cried in vain for assistance and was so indignant at his ill-treatment, that violent denunciations interrupted every sentence. Mac Gillmore's people crowded round with looks of mirthful curiosity, as if they had never seen a churchman before, or thought his office ridiculous. The Abbot's threats were met with rude laughter, and, had he refused to perform the marriage service, blows would have compelled him to proceed.

"In vain I wept and supplicated. In vain I would have said 'no,' while my heart, full of grief and abhorrence as it was, said 'yes.' The words were wrung from the reluctant churchman, and he was obliged to swear at the dagger's point, that it was a true and binding marriage he had celebrated. Blessed be God, he did not know me ! and I know not to what name I

answered. Had he recognised me I should have died rather than endure his reproaches ; but he knew afterwards who I was, as you shall hear, father. I can talk of that scene now with little emotion, for I have beheld others since that day, which surpass it in horror. When the ceremony was over I became faint, and when I returned to consciousness again, the Abbot and his fierce escort were gone, and I was alone with my bridegroom. Father, it is wonderful the power Mac Gillmore has had over me from the first moment he saw me to this day. My regrets could never last before his caresses, and before his anger, thank God ! I never had to stand. The Abbot had told me that the man I was marrying was a heathen, who had neither God nor saint to pray to. I believed it to be the natural invective of the insulted churchman ; not that Hugh ever told me he was a Christian, for I had never felt it necessary to ask him the question, but believed that the violence he had done the Abbot was so great as to make it natural for that enraged ecclesiastic to deny that he or his people could be within the Church's pale. In truth, father, after the shock was over, I was too happy in my new home, which we reached next night, to inquire whether the Abbot spoke truly or not. It was in the pleasantest season of the year, and we wanted for nothing that hearts contented in themselves could wish for. We were in the fastest country in Ireland : there was but one pass to it, and a single man could hold it against a hundred.

"Hugh spent his mornings in the field, hunting and fishing : at night he played on the harp or sang to me, while his foster-brothers made their arrows, or prepared their fishing tackle. The wives of our fosterers were modest and kind-hearted, and as we were many a day's journey from a church it was not possible to attend one.

In truth, father, I forgot everything in the novelty of my situation. I no longer remembered which was Sunday or which Monday ; for all days of the year were high festivals with us ; and if Hugh brought us game from the woods for twenty days together, I excused his supposed forgetfulness by remembering that it could not but be long since one leading such a life as his, could have received instructions from his clergy. It was sinful, I know, thus to forget my duties in my happiness ; but, father, it was thoughtlessness more than conscious neglect. Winter came, and our hunting booth was strengthened and enlarged ; a bawn was raised about it, and the kindred sent us a herd of fat cattle, with warm mantles and whatever else the season demanded.

“ Winter passed as happily as summer, and my baby was born in the spring. Hugh had been summoned away three days before. He had promised not to remain longer than a single day, yet he did not return for ten days after. Fears for him made me less anxious to have my boy baptized than I should have been had he been with me. In truth, I scarce thought of the infant’s christening in apprehension for his father’s safety. At length he returned ; but what a tale he had to tell me ! The retreat of his people had been discovered, and my brothers, with the church vassals of Bangor, Muckamore and Carrickfergus, had spoiled them of their entire substance, burnt their dwellings, and put more than one half of their whole number to the sword. Adam Mac Gillmore and his eldest son were amongst the slain, and on Hugh the chieftainship of the kindred had devolved. The remnant of the clan were to be with us that night, Hugh had scarce time to kiss his infant son before he was again summoned away to muster the little force of fighting men that remained, and make one last effort to recover some of their plun-

dered herds. Weak as I was, I rose and assisted in preparing the best reception we could for the fugitives. I had never seen any of my husband's kindred, save those who lived along with us, and the wild horsemen who had been present at my wedding. I now no longer regarded them with abhorrence as the murderers of my father, I was eager to alleviate their sufferings as the victims of my people's revenge ; so that I awaited their arrival anxiously ; but, father, when the multitude of mourners, children, women, and old men, who were henceforth to be my kindred, appeared toiling slowly up the hill before our dwelling, I was in the first bitterness of my disappointment, base enough to reproach Hugh in my heart, for bringing me among such savage beings.

“ After they had pitched their booths and secured the few goods they had been enabled to preserve, some of the elder women came to my dwelling, to offer me such services as they had in their power to bestow. My infant was naturally the chief object of their attention ; and they showed such tenderness about him as won my gratitude. It was kind and generous in those, who but a few minutes before had been bewailing their own dead, to sing as they did to the child of one, whose people had been such bitter enemies to them. But while they were nursing the infant and trying to trace a likeness to his father on his little features, one of them asked me by what name I meant to call my son ; and I shall never forget the terror and sickness that fell upon me, when on my replying that so soon as our present troubles were over I hoped to get a priest, and have him called by his father's name ; she who had asked the question, looking as if she did not understand me, repeated the words—‘A priest, Bantierna, and what would you please to do with a priest?’

“ ‘To baptize my child,’ I answered.

“‘Baptize—baptize!’ she repeated, looking round inquiringly on her companions, ‘what is that?’

“‘Hush!’ said another with a reproving look; ‘don’t you know that the Bantierna is of the Kinel-Chriost?’

“‘And, blessed Virgin,’ I exclaimed, ‘are you not Christians also?’

“‘No, Bantierna,’ replied the first speaker, with a look of unconscious surprise, ‘we are of the Kinel-Gillmore.’

“I snatched my baby from her arms, and sank back on a seat, so shocked and horrified that I could not utter a word. The women crowded round amazed and commiserating; but she who had reproved the first speaker pushed them back, and desired them to leave her alone with me. She then sat down and strove to console me in the best way she could. ‘Bantierna,’ she said, ‘you must not be angry with them, for they do not know what you mean. And it would be hard for creatures like us to know anything but hardship and sorrow, when we have been outcasts and wanderers beyond the memory of man. I am an old woman now,’ she continued, ‘and it is just as much as I can remember, that when I was a little girl there was some word of what you said going among the kindred, and I have heard Adam Garv, that is gone, say himself, that his mother used to tell him he had been christened, all but his right hand—and that they had left it untouched, that it might strike the harder blow.’

“Father, you may judge what I felt, as I sat looking on the face of my infant born among such a kindred, while the poor garrulous creature unconsciously went on adding pang to pang, till I thought, as I pressed my baby to my breast, that the heart within would have broken asunder. I had known that Hugh paid no

respect to the persons of churchmen: I had seen that he was negligent of all the domestic observances that the Church prescribes to her children; and I had excused him for both from the consciousness that I had acquiesced in them; but I had hoped to see him forgiven, and to be received back with him, before I died, into the bosom of the Church, for, that he was like myself, a baptized Christian, I had never doubted till now. But now, anxious to know the worst at once, I asked the woman, had the Tierna been ever christened? 'Never,' she said; 'but,' she added, 'if you would have it done to the Tierna Oge, we can catch a priest, and make him do that work, as we made the Abbot of Bangor do the other.'

"'And how,' I asked, 'if Mac Gillmore be, as you say, ignorant of these things, did he know that it was necessary to have the Abbot of Bangor to say the marriage words between us?'

"'He had heard of the like, I suppose,' she said, 'when he was with O'Neill, preying the Scots of Loch Ryan: he was among the Kinel-Chriost at that time for the space of three moons.'

"Little as I could expect he would have learned from such companions as the galloglass and kerns of O'Neill, yet, even this was some consolation, and I fondly hoped that he might have gained more knowledge during that experience of the world within the pale of the Church, than he had thought fit to communicate to his wild kindred without it. I determined, therefore, to wait his return with as much resignation as I could.

"Meanwhile, the care of my new charges occupied me to the happy exclusion of too much meditation. But, in what a scene I found myself! kinsmen and kinswomen, all pagans! The women with whom I had converse

living with the fathers of their children in a state of nature. The children growing up to follow their parents' savage example—the maintenance of a wretched life their only care here, and the bequeathing of similar cares to another generation, their only hope hereafter. Yet nature in their hearts was human nature still; and, if their untamed passions were strong, so, too, were their affections, nor could I have hoped that I, the sister of their persecutors, could ever have been made such an object of good will, as I soon became amongst them. Hugh had all their hearts, and for his sake they tried to love me, and even before he returned, I had experienced many generous proofs of their devotion. It was never in my nature to cherish aversion towards any being; much less towards those whose chiefest pleasure seemed to be to serve me! so that by the time Hugh came back, my premeditated reproaches were already half-forgotten, and I went to meet him more in the fulness of forgiveness than of sorrow. But I had little time for either reproach or condolence. The prey had been recovered, but not without burning the bawn in which the plunderers had taken shelter. The bawn was the courtyard of the church of Drum, and the hands and face of my husband were black with the smoke of sacrilege, for church and altar had both been reduced to ashes in the fray, and priests as well as laymen had perished in the flames. The pastures of our retreat were insufficient to graze the recovered herds, and we prepared to fly that very night into the more extensive fastnesses of Kilultagh. If we were not on the borders of our new place of refuge before sunset, all chance of escape from the multitude, now in pursuit of us, would be cut off.

“All was confusion and excitement, marshalling the herds and baggage horses; framing new litters for the wounded; packing up household goods, and strapping

the children on their mothers' backs for the journey. Hugh had no time for anything but his duties to the kindred. He did not even wait to wash the marks of the conflict from his person. I was lifted into a litter, with my infant in my arms, and it was not till we were half an hour on our march, that he rode up beside me. Overwhelmed, as I was, with grief and astonishment, I could say little: he was in deep distress, yet still filled with indignation against the plunderers of the kindred, but he said that, although for my sake it went against his heart to lay the torch to a church door, there were now hundreds depending on him for their very existence, and that, sooner than let one of them suffer an hour's starvation, while the herds of which they had been plundered could be rescued by either fire or sword, he would see all the churches of Ireland in flames over the heads of their enemies. What could I say or do? Reproach was worse than useless. I had gone too far from the first moment I left my home with him, to turn back. I pressed my poor infant to my bosom, and submitted to the evils which I could not redress.

“Our new retreat was the wildest country I had yet seen. It was a far different home from the lovely valley I had left; but, for a while we had peace among its rocks and marshes, and, during this period of comparative security, I made my effort for Hugh's conversion, and, as I have told you, failed. You may wonder why I have not blamed him more for concealing his heathenish condition from me at first; but, in truth I well believe his excuse, that, save the marriage ceremony, he knew of little else that I would desire, and knowing that he could at any time procure that service by force, as he did, he scarce thought of other obstacles at all. But, as I told you, father, although I might excite his wonder or his curio-

sity, by telling him of the sacred mysteries of our religion, I could never succeed in gaining from him any further regard for them than he already entertained for the lying legends of bards and rhymers. He offered me, indeed, at whatever risk, to bring a priest, by force, to christen the child, but I viewed the sin of the sacrilege as greater than the danger of the infant's remaining a little longer as he was, and would not consent.

“Four years passed, and the kindred continued unmolested in their deserts. I had, in a great measure, reconciled myself to the life we led, and would have been quite happy but for the thoughts of our godless estate, which I could never banish from my mind. One of Hugh's fosterers had ventured into the low country, and brought us word that it was given out among my people that I had fallen, by accident, into a pool of the river, and was drowned. This was pleasant news to me, for it had often caused me many a bitter tear to think what a stain it would be upon my kindred, if it were known that I had fled with a pagan, and still more, if it were believed, as I feared it might be, that I was not united to him in wedlock.

“Thus, father, I have brought down my history to the time when I first settled into a reluctant acquiescence in the wretched fate I had brought on myself, and henceforth you are to view me as yielding, day by day, to the confirming power of custom, until I grew at length not only hopeless, but, I blush to say, careless of breaking through it. And now began the hardships and misfortunes which brought the kindred into the troubles that have pursued them without intermission for the last five years. A dry summer forced us to drive our herds to low land for the convenience of water. Some of the cattle strayed down farther, and were not recovered till they

had got upon the borders of Turlogh Moyle Mac Henry's country. Our fosterers who went after them were known to some of Turlogh's people: and they, holding of the prior of Muckamore, pursued them. They escaped by speed of foot, but our retreat was discovered, and in three days after we were driven back into our old pastures by the church vassals of the valley. Our cattle took a murrain and died upon the mountain, and we were reduced to famine before the little corn we had was ready for the reaping-hook. Then the kindred broke loose from the heart of the hills in despair, and lifted a prey out of the grange lands of Nalteen. But there was no rest for their feet in Moylinny, for the Quinns of Edenduffcarrick, and the O'Haras of the Glen, rose upon us, and we were forced back on this side of the Ollarva again. Here we held our own for a winter, and in the spring made good this post upon Ben Madigan, which we account the fastest we have ever possessed; but the pasture is scanty, and we have to keep our main herds further inland.

"And now, father, my sad history draws to a conclusion. You may be sure that, when the report of our being forced from our mountain retreat went abroad, my brothers were not backward in coming against us with the rest. But Mac Gillmore met them at the fords, where he had overthrown them before, and had the victory a second time, for they were taken by surprise at night, and both Raymond and Alan fell into our hands. I was with the main creaght in the interior, nor did I know that my brothers were prisoners until long after; for they were kept in the caves here under strong ward, and it was not till their ransom had been paid that what I am about to tell you happened. My youngest child—she was a little girl, father, the only girl we had—she is gone now with the rest, God be good to her innocent soul! for

my Harry *dhias* is the only one that sickness and hardship have left me—but, father, the child had fallen sick, and the doctor of the clan was with Mac Gillmore on Ben Madigan. I would have sent for him, but that I knew he could ill be spared from the attendance on two of the kindred who were lying wounded in the caves. So I determined to take the child to him, myself, and, accordingly, I mounted a litter and came across the hills that morning, with a guard of four fosterers. I had not been here for more than three months, and I was not expected, so that after passing the outer posts we came down upon the kindred unawares. It was just at the descent over the northern brow of the hill, down which Mac Gillmore brought you yesterday, that we met him and the heads of the clan coming up with two strangers.

“We met, face to face, on the narrow path, and they were so haggard, from their imprisonment, that at first I did not know my brothers, for they were sorely changed since I had seen them nine years before, in the pride of youth and manly beauty. Both their beards were grown a span long, but Alan looked the sterner and paler. The first glance I had of them, and even before I recognised my brothers, I saw that there was something amiss; for Mac Gillmore signed impatiently and fiercely for my escort to turn back, and seemed to make an effort to withdraw their attention from me. But Raymond, the moment he beheld my face, sprang forward and grasped the reins of the leading horse. I knew him then, and screamed aloud, for he looked at me with a terrible countenance. ‘Depart in peace, Sirs,’ I then heard Mac Gillmore saying to them; ‘she is my wife.’ Then Raymond said he lied, and called me by one viler name than I deserved, and Mac Gillmore struck him a blow with the handle of his dagger in the face, but Alan ran up and

held Raymond back, crying that all they wanted was to murder him, and said—words that I remember to this day—‘Hold back, Raymond. Do not acknowledge her: she is dead—she is drowned—you know that this is no sister of ours.’ ‘That may do to tell at Dundonald,’ Raymond cried, ‘but if all the kindred stood present, I would not hold my hand from the pagan villain who has brought this blot upon our house,’ and, at the words, he tore himself out of Alan’s grasp, and wrenching a sword from one of the clan who stood beside, he rushed upon Mac Gillmore, who had barely time to draw his weapon before they were engaged in deadly combat. Alan and our fosterers ran in to part them, but Mac Gillmore cried that he would strike the first man dead who interfered, and when I fell among the rocks in springing from the litter to rush between them, I could hear him over the clashing of their weapons calling to his people to let the Mac Seneschals go free, come what might; for they had thrown themselves upon Alan, and would have surely slain him had Mac Gillmore fallen. But, alas, alas! how could a worn and broken prisoner stand long before the keenest swordsman in Ulster, fresh from the field, and fighting on his own ground? When I fell their swords had not crossed ten times, and when I rose, Raymond was a corpse upon the green sward at my feet. The love for my brother that had lain dead in my breast for nine long years was revived. I cast myself down beside him; I kissed his lips, and mourned over him with such a grief as I never felt before, except for my own child. Mac Gillmore stood a moment, and contemplated the work of his hands, then, in a low voice, bade his people form a bier of branches, and bear the dead man to his kindred, who awaited him at the remote outposts; and then, turning to Alan, he said, ‘*Dhuine Wasail*, depart in peace.’ ‘Not

as, I will come again,' said Alan, and I looked up as he spoke, and oh, father, the glance he cast at me was hard to bear, though he spoke not a word to me, but still addressed himself to Mac Gillmore. 'Pagan,' he said, 'when I come again, we will have a fairer field,' and turning sullenly away, he strode up the path. I thought he would have spoken to me. I could not let him go thus. I rose and followed him: he would not hear me: I clasped his mantle; he turned and pushed me away. I would have again supplicated him to speak to me, though I scarce knew what I could have said to appease him, but Mac Gillmore came up, and lifting me like an infant, bore me back to the litter, where he placed the child in my arms, and I followed him to the cave in silence. From that day I have known no peace. The bleeding images of my brother and father are constantly before my eyes. In my dreams I think I see Alan coming: his words are ever in my ears. It is all the punishment of my sin and folly; but blessed be He who inflicts it, I have learned to bear His judgments with resignation."

Both sat silent for a few minutes after she had finished her sad narrative, the lady awaiting the severe sentence which she felt her faults and errors had deserved, and the kindly ecclesiastic pondering the gentlest mode of consolation for one afflicted with such numerous and unexampled misfortunes.

"Daughter," at length he said, "it is a blessed thing that thou canst suffer so much without repining. I have heard many woeful histories, but thy griefs are without parallel. Yet thy sins have also been great, nor have these calamities fallen on thee unprovoked. Thou hast been in some measure an apostate from the faith, and, notwithstanding the wrongs done thy people by the Church, I can call thine abetting of Mac Gillmore's feud

little else than sacrilege. Thy marriage, too, was far from such a ceremony as ought to have satisfied a virtuous maiden, yet I would not on that account call thy child illegitimate. But thou must no longer be the mother of a pagan. Bring me thy boy, and under God we will begin the blessed work by christening him."

The lady's countenance, which had been downcast and troubled as brother Virgil recapitulated the instances of her guilt or disgrace, suddenly grew bright with joyful emotion. "May Heaven reward you, holy and blessed man!" she exclaimed, rising with glad looks to seek the boy.

"Nay, daughter," said brother Virgil, "call me not by these titles, which belong to God's saints alone. I am but a poor servant of the blessed Francis, and such service as I can render thee is to be accounted to his praise and honour, not to mine."

"Glory be to his name," cried the lady, as Harry Oge, whom she had risen to seek, entered at the door, accompanied by his foster-father and tutor, Owen Grumagh.

"Glory be to his name, indeed," ejaculated brother Virgil; "he has sent the boy in good time; come hither, my son: thou art a fair boy, may Heaven bless thee! what is thy name?"

"Harry Oge Mac Hugh Mor Mac Adam, and I am of the clan Gillmore," replied the boy boldly.

"And who gave thee that name, my son?" asked the Franciscan.

"The kindred call me plain Harry, but the other is my name by right," was the boy's answer.

"And wouldst thou rather be called by that long name than by plain Harry?" asked brother Virgil.

"No," replied the boy; "but if I were a Tierna Mor, and had conquered all my enemies, the bards would say,

when they were asked who fought the great breach, or who drove the great prey, that it was Harry Oge Mac Hugh Mor Mac Adam, and then they would all know that I was not bleared Harry Mac Hugh Calvagh, nor limping Harry Mac Hugh Beg."

The good brother smiled, and, patting the boy's dark curly head, exclaimed, "Mayest thou indeed be famous among the bards, my son; but neither for fighting battles nor for driving preys."

"And what else would a man be famous for?" demanded the boy.

"My son," replied the good old monk, "some men have been famous for one thing, some for another. Ollav Fola was famous for giving good laws to his people; Cormac Mac Cuillenan gained great honour for piety and holiness. Wouldst thou not rather be famous for doing good, as these renowned princes shall be to the end of time, than be known to the bards, as others are, for nothing but bloodthirstiness and cruelty, and covetousness? Wouldst thou not rather be Harry *Lamh Fosgaltagh*, than Harry *Lamh Dearg*?"

"I would rather be Harry *Lamh Laidir* than either," cried the boy; "for the strong hand rules all."

"Well, so as thou dost rule justly and mercifully, be Harry of the strong hand with God's blessing," cried brother Virgil; "and now, Bantierna, get me the water in a pure vessel, and we will be his sponsors ourselves for want of better."

"What are you going to do to the Tierna Oge, Gilly Francisagh?" demanded Owen, who had stood by, listening in silent pride to his pupil's ready answers; and now seemed to think it high time to interfere when he saw the monk busied in preparing the consecrated water—"are you going to put incantations on my foster son?"

"The holy man is going to christen my child, son of Rory," said the lady.

"What is that?" asked the boy, drawing back.

"My son," said the monk, "didst thou not tell me that thy mother would never have gone to the wood with Mac Gillmore if they had not been wedded by a lord abbot?"

"Aye," said the boy; "and who says that they were not?"

"No one, my brave boy; but just as the Bantierna would not have gone with thy father without being wedded; so no lady of the land would go with thee if she knew that thou hadst not been christened by a priest."

"What is it like?" said the boy, advancing a step, but still holding his foster-father by the hand.

"Nay, Harry," said the lady, "come to the holy man at once; he is only going to pronounce thy name, and give thee his blessing, as the priest did with me when I also was a child."

"And did the priest do it to my father too?" said Harry, still hanging back, although strongly tempted by the advantages held out by brother Virgil.

"No, my child," replied the lady; "your father was not so fortunate; but your grandfather, and all your people down to your grandfather's time, were duly baptized as became a Christain kindred—son of Rory, you know that what I say is true."

"It is true, indeed," said Owen; "I remember Adam Garv saying so himself, and, for a token, he would tell us that they had left his right hand unchristened, that it might hit the harder; but Adam would laugh when he would tell the story, for he was *kithogue*, and struck sorest with his left."

"But we will christen thee, my son, both right and

left, and hand and foot," said brother Virgil, holding out his hand to the boy.

But Harry and his tutor still hesitated. "You will put no charm upon me?" asked the one. "What you are going to do will not turn him against the kindred?" stipulated the other.

"What, son of Rory, think you I would consent to have the Tierna Oge turned against his people?" said the lady, indignantly.

The clansman, awed by an authority which had never been exerted in vain, yielded without dispute: "As the Bantierna pleases," he said, leading his foster-son forward, and committing him into the hands of the Franciscan. The boy at first showed a somewhat scornful impatience; but as the ceremony proceeded, he began to gaze with a gradually subdued wonder upon the earnest and solemn countenance of the priest. Then awe succeeded to wonder, and his eyes, he knew not why, filled with tears, as the pious man, looking upward, pronounced, amid mysterious words, those names which he had often heard his mother call on under sorrow and pain. He suffered the consecrated water to be sprinkled on his head, and the sacred symbol to be signed upon his forehead by the finger of the priest, without murmur or motion; and, after the benediction was completed and all the ceremony of his baptism was over, he stood gazing on the countenance of his initiator in breathless and awe-struck silence, till his delighted mother, casting her arms about his neck, covered his glistening face with kisses, and welcomed him with a thousand blessings into the church of his fathers. Owen Grumach had looked on with equal wonder, but not with equal reverence. He took his foster-son by the hand, when his mother had ceased to cover him with her caresses, and shaking off the

drops that still hung among his thick hair, he asked him. "Harry a vic machree, what was it they were doing to you? Was your fair head not wet enough with the rain this morning, when you were walking the dews before the lazy Gilly was out of his bed, that he should throw cold water in your face now, as if you were a woman in a faint?"

"Hush, Owen," said the boy, speaking low; "it did not hurt me."

"It were not well for him if it had," said Owen; "but come now, avic, it is time to go and shoot at the target."

At the same moment the lady was summoned to attend Mac Gillmore, and the monk, promising to remain within call, in case his services should be needed, accompanied his catechumen, with his tutor to the field. The shooting ground was a smooth stripe of green sward, stretching along the foot of the rocks to one of those fantastic knolls which have been described as rising like the waves of an agitated sea, around the base of the cliff. This verdant hillock formed the butt, and the target of wood was erected about midway up its green acclivity. The youths of the clan were divided into companies according to their age; and when brother Virgil came forth, those among whom Harry Oge was to be included, were just taking their position a little nearer the mark than the elder band who had preceded them. Whether it was by chance, or that he was more emulous in the presence of a stranger, or that the boy's mind was really elevated by the consciousness of some high privilege conferred upon him in the mysterious ceremony he had undergone, Harry Oge not only surpassed all his fellows in archery, but bore himself with so eminently graceful and elate an air, as attracted the attention of all present. "By the broad

stone," cried Hugh Calvagh, "I thought my Harry was half a head taller than the Tierna Oge; but, somehow, the son of Hugh Mor looks as tall as he when they are asunder; though when they stand together you can easily see the difference."

"I never saw a vouchaleen of his age make such shooting as he is making to-day," said Hugh Beg; "my Harry, Baccagh though he be, shot ring for ring with him yesterday; but you see he cannot touch his worst mark to-day."

"Something has surely come over him," said a third speaker, as the boys, when they had finished their bow exercise, started in the footrace that followed: "See how he heads the whole flight. Tieg Gasta, that we thought the fastest of his company is half a pike's length behind him. There, foot of Finn! how he cleared the ditch; and, see, he runs as light as a fawn, and the rest are panting like slot-hounds on a summer day. Surely some one has put a charm upon him. Son of Rory, what have you been doing to the Tierna Oge?"

"Ask the Gilly Francisagh," said Owen; "for, by the hand of my body, I think it was an incantation he put upon him, after all."

"Servant of Francis," said the clansman, going up to brother Virgil, where he stood gazing with quiet pleasure on the animated scene, "have you a spell for the palsy? I would give you a milking goat, with her two kids, if you would put the charm upon my father: he has been bedrid since last Lammas floods."

"Friend," replied the Franciscan, "I have neither spell nor charm; I leave such sorceries to dealers in the black art."

"And what is it that you have done to the Tierna Oge?" demanded the clansman, "for he is not like the

same boy he was; though a comely and an active vouchaleen he has been ever and always."

"Ay, Gilly Francisagh, what did you do to him?" asked another, and the same question was repeated by several standing round, so that brother Virgil suddenly found himself the centre of a group prepared to receive all that he had desired to tell them, but which he had half despaired of their attending to. Much pleased by so favourable an opportunity, he took his stand upon a detached mass of rock that lay beside, and, thus elevated in the midst of his auditory, he addressed them:

"My friends and brethren—for all men are brothers in the sight of God—you have asked me whether I have dealt with your chieftain's son with such enchantments as are commonly used by sorcerers and wizards—God forbid! The people of my faith abhor all dealing in magic. The success of spells and incantations cometh of the devil, who is the father of the black art: him we reject, and all his works we abominate; but, brethren, if the sacrament which I have administered to the son of your chieftain make him stronger of hand, or fleet of foot, or fairer of face, as ye seem to think that it hath done, the success thereof most manifestly cometh of God, in whose name I have baptized him. In His name I am ready to baptize you all; but look not that a like wonder shall be shown on each as hath been manifested in this lovely and chosen boy; for, by baptizing you, I but prepare you for the knowledge of these things, which if you believe not, that baptism is of no avail. Behold in what a condition ye are for want of that knowledge which I would thus prepare you to receive. Other kindreds of men possess fixed dwellings on their own lands, each one his home secured to him by law, which none dare violate; but you are wanderers and outcasts, houseless and law-

less, dwelling only where the weakness of enemies stands you instead of the good will of friends. Where other men enjoy that security of protection which gives them time and confidence to till the earth for its fruits, to have white bread and sweet wine at will, to clothe themselves in warm and seemly garments, to travel for pleasure or on their necessary occasions through fair countries, and beautiful cities, seeing all the wonders and delights of the world without danger and without hardship, you, my hapless brothers, knowing not the moment when you must fly from before your enemies, have to leave the earth untilled, the arts of industry unpractised, the sweets of life untasted : clad in the skins of beasts you must hide your heads in desert and inhospitable forests ; afraid to venture beyond the bounds of a dismal wilderness, you sigh to hear of the blossoming orchards ; the yellow waving corn fields ; the stately cities ; the luxurious palaces and delicious gardens which lie in the forbidden land without. You are separated from mankind ; a single kindred in the midst of innumerable nations, all in the enjoyment of blessings which you can never share but by returning to the world that you have abandoned. But how can you return ? Brethren, I will tell you. The same bond which keeps the numberless kindreds of men who compose this great and goodly world whereof I speak, from sundering from one another, and falling into even such wildness as your own, can also bind you with the rest. That bond is neither the relationship of blood, for the kindred of whom I speak draw their descent from far distant continents ; nor the tie of common country, for they inhabit various lands ; nor the likeness of their countenances, for they are of divers feature and colour ; nor the understanding of one another's language, for they speak in a hundred different tongues ; nor the

resemblance of their laws by which they are governed, for some are ruled by senates, and some by kings, and some by elected chieftains; and yet the bond is strong enough to bind them all, and without it no other tie could bind them. It is their belief in one God, my brethren, that unites the nations; their worship of that God, as prescribed by one Church, that gives the unchanging stability to that union; and the enactment of laws in accordance with the holy precepts of one Gospel by which that God has revealed himself and established that Church, which completes that mystic bond of their society, and the glorious work of their salvation. It is this knowledge of God that ye want; it is this knowledge of God that I offer to you; but to know God as he has revealed himself to his children, you must hearken to the Church whose messenger I am; and to prepare you for receiving her instructions aright, I am ready, under God, to administer this holy sacrament of baptism to as many of you as are willing, with honest hearts, to receive it."

When brother Virgil concluded, there was a stir among the crowd, and considerable interest seemed to have been excited by his discourse, for the people whispered earnestly together, and there was no motion made by any to depart. At length one clansman stood forward, and asked—"Gilly Francisagh, if we do this, are you sure that Mac Gillmore will not be displeased?"

"It was to teach you these things that he invited me hither," replied brother Virgil.

"And if we do all as you desire," asked another, "how soon might we look to be settled in the country of the gardens and corn fields? Could we get down do you think before the harvest?"

"Alas, my friend," said the good monk, "sheep who have strayed so far can scarce hope to be taken back at

once into the fold ; but if thou wilt believe in God as I shall tell thee, I will promise thee a better reward than ever human husbandmen reaped off the face of earth."

"What is that?" demanded several voices.

"Even life eternal, joy and glory before God in heaven for ever!" exclaimed brother Virgil.

It grieved the good man much, to perceive that the more precious promise had the less effect. They heard him with wonder, but without emotion. "How can we have joy and glory if we are dead?" said one; "But does he not say that we will live for ever," cried another; "I do not understand him," said a third, "but I would be satisfied with what he offered first."

"I see my error," exclaimed brother Virgil; "I have told you only of the worldly ills you suffer, I have painted only the worldly blessings you have lost; but there are blessings to be sought and evils to be dreaded in another world of which I have not yet told you; but, if ye have ears to hear, listen to me proclaiming them before you now;" and with the fervor of a sincere heart the pious man proceeded, after announcing to them the immortality of the soul, to pourtray in vivid colours the opposite condition of the faithful and of the unbelieving after death. The pagans stood astonished, incredulity yielding to hope on the one hand, and to alarm on the other. The preacher saw his success; he heightened his pictures to the excited imaginations of his hearers; he made every man the spectator of his own possible condition throughout eternity; then returning to themselves, he represented, as it were by the reflection of that supernatural light, the earthly heaven and hell of virtuous or sinful bosoms; all felt the truth brought home to their own hearts; some started like detected and confounded criminals; others, resenting the allusions

which each considered separately directed to himself, stood with looks of indignation and irresolute defiance; one or two were melted into tears, and there were none, however young, indifferent. Even Owen Grumagh was touched, but far from satisfied: "How do you know all this, Gilly Francisagh," he said, in a pause of the good monk's discourse.

"God has empowered the Church to teach us His will, and the Church declares it," replied brother Virgil; "the Church declares it, and the very ground we stand upon bears witness to the signs and wonders that accompanied her message of it to this ungrateful land."

"How is that?" demanded several voices.

Brother Virgil, in reply, pointed out the localities of many of the miraculous events related in the lives of Patrick, Bridget and Columba, all visible from the spot where they stood. This appeal had more than its effect. "It is true, it is true," cried Hugh Calvagh, when the monk related to them how Patrick raised the tide to wash away the Sabbath-breaker's building on the hill of Drumbo. "It is true," cried the too enthusiastic believer; "for Fin Mac Coule built up the same fort in one night after, and you may see his finger-stone hard by in the ring of Ballylessan to this day."

"Nay, nay," said the Franciscan; "thou art confounding thy profane legends with the acts of the saints"—and, extricating himself as quickly as he could from the unprofitable question, he proceeded, as has been said, notwithstanding many interruptions equally frivolous, to inculcate the grand truths which found their evidence in every heart, till at the conclusion of his address such an impression had been made on the whole multitude, that when two women and a man pressed forward and offered themselves for baptism, there was a general hum of

approval from all present. The triumphant monk, with tears of joy in his eyes, prepared to celebrate the ceremony without delay, for he was well aware of the effect of example, and he already indulged no ill-founded expectations that if he could effect the baptism of one or two, he might ultimately succeed in making converts of the whole clan. "Bring me water in a pure vessel," he cried, "and let those who aspire to the knowledge of the true God stand forth!" The three who had offered themselves immediately advanced into the circle which the crowd now formed before him: their example was contagious; first one, and then another, stepped forth, amid loud acclamations, and took their places by their sides; then there was a confused movement among the mass of the crowd, the people impelled backwards and forwards with an irresolute motion, like the eddying swell and retreat of waves upon the shore, until at last, breaking their ranks in a tumultuous burst of enthusiasm, the whole Muintir Gillmore rushed forward to the feet of their exhorter, and, with one voice, cried aloud to be baptized.

Never did the bosom of an apostle glow with more intense and pure delight than now, in the first joy of his unexpected success, thrilled through the heart of the pious Virgil. "Glory be to God!" he exclaimed, extending his hands to heaven over the heads of the multitude; "blessed be the day and hour that sees this glorious and heavenly sight! blessed be the eyes that behold it, and the tongue that tells it, and the feet that bear the tidings of it, and blessed for ever be He who hath formed those hands to do His holy will in perfecting and proving the bliss it promises! Nay, nay," he said, as a pitcher of water was placed before him on the rock; "out of no vessel made by hands will I celebrate this sublime sacra-

ment of a nation's redemption. Come to the running waters, where the fountain will not weary in giving us its clear element, that faint yet still that best earthly image of the purity of God's nature and of the inexhaustible abundance of God's love."

He descended from the rock as he spoke, and, taking Harry Oge, who stood beside, by the hand, bade him lead him to the spring. The boy obeyed, with silent reverence, the crowd thronging round or rushing forward, and eagerly contending who should be first to gain a place on the brink of the little well. All the booths, save that of the chieftain, were deserted; old and young, seized with an equal enthusiasm, poured down the face of the hill, and, but for the interference of Owen Grumagh, who either regarded the Franciscan with contempt, as the propounder of unintelligible mysteries, or with resentment, as having indulged in some denunciations which seemed to have been levelled peculiarly at him, the very sentinels and outposts would have left their stations and joined the general concourse.

To contemplate such a scene without emotions of pride was not to be expected from the human heart of the good Virgil. It could not be but that some fragments of the dispersed visions of the morning would flit involuntarily before his eyes as he viewed the approaching completion of this, the greatest and most important act in his imaginary drama. The chapel and altars, and the page of the red-lettered calendar, bearing Virgilius de Rupe conspicuous among the names of saints and martyrs, did, it is true, occasionally intervene between the mind's eye of the worthy man and his loftier objects of contemplation; but if the divine will sometimes use human instruments, the service of angels is not extracted from them. And now, after descending the romantic steep, they were

arrived at the fountain, a limpid well about half-a-mile down the hill, lying so smooth and pellucid in its white bed of limestone, that, but for the noise of its waters where they fell babbling over the natural terrace out of the green esplanade of which they had sprung, a moment before, one would scarcely have suspected the presence of the translucent and almost invisible element. Here, in the bright sunshine, with a blue sky overhead, and a verdant amphitheatre around, the assembled outcasts stood awaiting the mysterious rite that was to readmit them to the society of mankind.

It was a strange and touching scene; the good monk in the midst, kneeling on the margin, his venerable figure distinctly rendered back by the liquid mirror beneath, as, with elevated hands, he consecrated the desert waters to man's dearest service; the front rank of the expectant multitude sitting on the grass around, those behind them kneeling, and the remote spectators on tiptoe, straining their necks to catch a glimpse of his mysterious proceedings; then the black cliffs peeping over the sunny slope behind them; and the thick tree-tops extending from the base of the grassy terrace where they were assembled, in one matted and impassable wilderness, down to the water's edge below—all formed a picture not unworthy of the novel and important occasion, and it was little wonder if brother Virgil, when he called forth his first catechumen, felt his breast distended with emotions, such as he could, to some extent, blamelessly compare with those of earlier apostles. "It was thus that Patrick stood by Tubbermore, and baptized the heathen of Laharna," he unconsciously said to himself; "it was thus that Dunstan in a single day made three thousand inheritors of life eternal, and gained a crown of glory for his own brows for ever. John thus in Jordan"—but before he had time

either to complete the audacious comparison, or to perceive its sinfulness, he was interrupted by the approach of a messenger, who was seen coming down the hill at the top of his speed, and heard shouting, while still at a distance, "To arms, kindred! to arms! Alan Duff is upon us!"

All rose in consternation. The cry on all hands was that the enemy was coming. The catechumen, who was kneeling at the moment under the hands of brother Virgil, started to his feet, and, looking wildly round, demanded "Where?" then, receiving no reply to his question in the tumult, drew his skene, and darted off towards the encampment, whither all were already hurrying in furious haste and disorder. It was like the dispersion of a cloud before the wind. Brother Virgil had stooped to lift the water in his palm, surrounded by a whole clan, silent, reverent, full of newly-awakened hopes, and eager to receive a peaceful sacrament; the drops were still falling from his fingers, and he stood alone, while up the hill before him rushed, with deafening clamour and vociferation, a frenzied multitude of men and women, driven by fright, anger, despair, revenge, and savage love of conflict. All were gone but Harry Oge, and he had run a stone's throw before he thought of turning to lead his father's physician back again. "We must make haste," he said, taking brother Virgil's hand in his; "for if Alan Duff be come, we are like to have a sore fight."

But the monk moved not; his amazement had given way to unmixed affliction; he stood as a man might do, who sees his whole wealth swept away by a whirlwind. His wealth had been the hope of doing good, and one moment had beggared him. They were gone, and who could tell when war and outlawry would let them back again, or whether death might not keep them away once and for ever? Gone with them were Calendar and

Crown—Tubbermore would still have the pre-eminence among Antrim's fountains—Dunstan need no longer dread a rival. "But I have provoked the judgment," cried poor Virgil, in the bitterness of his heart; "did I not compare myself to John the Baptist, and what less punishment could pride so impious deserve?"

"Father," said the boy, pulling him by the hand, when he saw that he gave no attention to his warning, "come away, or the kindred may leave us behind. Donough Ghasta, that brought the news, told me that if we cannot keep the hills by strong hand, we must take the road before sunset, for the high paths are wondrous hard to tread, and the cattle could not keep them in the dark."

"It is well for the cattle that God created them the brute animals they are," said brother Virgil, his mind still engrossed in the contemplation of his misfortune.

"Ay, but, father," cried the boy, in increased distress, "you'll find the Clan Savage wickeder cattle to deal with than any bulls you ever saw; and if you come not now they will catch us before we can get to the kindred, and as sure as they do, Black Alan will kill us both!"

"What of Black Alan, my son?" said the Franciscan, scarce yet comprehending the nature of the danger which had left him so suddenly deserted; "did they say that Black Alan Savage was coming?"

"Man, man!" exclaimed the boy, impatient with an ignorance which was to him incomprehensible, "do you not know that the black Mac Seneschal has fired the woods beyond Carrick Mac Art, and that if the wind doesn't fall he will have a passage into our strength before an hour?"

"Holy and blessed Francis!" exclaimed the monk, setting his face to the hill with such speed as his dress would permit. "Holy and blessed Francis! what will become of the poor lady and the sick chief?"

"They will carry Mac Gillmore on a litter, if need be," said the boy, running lightly beside, "and my mother has travelled the road often before."

"Good, good," said brother Virgil, the steep ascent preventing his using many words.

"Now," said the boy, pointing to the left, as they rose into a more extensive prospect of the south side of the hill, "look past the foot of the high rock between you and the slack of the black mountain beyond: don't you see a thin blue smoke driving towards us? That's where the Clan Savage are: they are burning their road before them. Donough says he saw it from the Carrick top, and that the whole wood is in a blaze; though it lies so low, we can only see some of the smoke of it from here."

The weary Franciscan by this time could only utter an ejaculation of assent as his youthful guide pointed out the indications of their danger. He was spent and out of breath, for the hill was smooth and the grass slippery, and the ascent so steep, that at last he was fairly forced to stop and breathe himself. This was rather a drawback on the reverence with which Harry Oge had regarded him. The flush upon Harry's cheek might have been heightened by the excitement of approaching danger, but he would have coursed the hill round and not have drawn a shorter breath than when he started. He would fain have been in the camp, too, with his people at such a time; yet he scarce liked to leave the poor monk without guidance, although now within a little distance of shelter. "Father," he said, "if you had been bred with us you would not be so scant of breath. Owen Grumagh makes us run up and down the hill every morning before meat; some of us can sing, too, going at the top of our speed. I'll tell you what: I'll run and get some of the kindred to help you, and I'll come back with them myself:" so

saying, and without waiting for a reply, the courageous boy ran on, carolling, in a clear sweet voice, though, perhaps, as much to keep his courage up as to display it—

Through the Abbey parks of Bangor
The dewlapped heifers roam,
And we'll stand the Abbot's anger
But we'll drive a colpack home;
We'll bide the Abbot's battle,
But this we still shall say,
Clan-na-Christha breeds the cattle,
Clan Gillmore drives the prey!

"Holy and blessed Francis," exclaimed the wearied monk, as he stood panting on the steep, while his only catechumen unconsciously gave this characteristic promise of an unregenerated life; "holy and blessed Francis! he is as wild a freebooter already in his heart as if he had neither been crossed nor christened! But surely he is a beauteous and brave boy, and I must not desert either him or his people, and they in this trouble:" so saying, the good brother turned once more to the ascent of the mountain. He had not proceeded more than a few steps when Harry Oge, accompanied by two fosterers, appeared over the nearest eminence coming to his assistance. The clansmen had been dispatched the moment their absence was perceived to bring both to the camp without delay, as the progress of the flames in the wood threatened very soon to give the clan Savage an entrance to the Mac Gillmore's hitherto impregnable retreat. As yet, however, the danger was not immediate, for the wood through which the passage was thus opening lay at a considerable distance from the encampment, and the broken ground between offered many obstacles to the advance of an army, even after they should have cut or burned their way

through the forest. In the encampment all was hurry and alarm ; yet much had already been effected in the way of preparation : the cattle were marshalled in herds upon the pathway leading to the top and back of the hill, ready to be driven off at a moment's notice. The baggage horses were tethered to stakes in front of the booths ; guards were duly stationed on all the commanding points, and the flower of the kindred had marched under Owen Grumagh to await the irruption of their enemies, and give them battle below.

" We stop here for to-night," said Turlogh—" to-morrow we shall conclude our narrative."

SIXTH NIGHT.

THE next night was rainy and tempestuous. The captives, listening to the wind without, as it whistled dismally through the embrasures and battlements of the surrounding walls, gathered round their hearth, awaiting the arrival of their keepers with more than usual resignation. " It is something to have a roof over one's head on such a night as this, even though the door be bolted on the wrong side," said Henry.

" We should not be long without better shelter if the bolts were drawn," said Art ; " yet many a poor wretch to-night would be glad to change places with us, for the sake even of such dry quarters."

" For one night he might," replied Henry ; " but the first glimpse of sunshine through the bars of his window in the morning, would make him rue his bargain speedily.

Oh, Heaven ! it is enough to set one crazy to see the tops of the Dublin mountains basking in the sun of a clear day, seeing just enough of them to know that there are running streams there and fresh banks of heather ; and then to think that you are here built up in stone and lime, like a lintel or a doorpost in the wall——. I have been dreaming of the green fields every night for the last week.”

“ And I dreamt last night that the Deputy had put us into a dungeon ten times worse than this,” said Art, “ with neither light nor fire ; but full of dead men’s bones and cold and damp as any grave. It is true, when I awakened I found that the coverlet had fallen off, and that the rain was beating in through the open loop-hole at the head of my bed : but the place I thought we were in seemed so horrible, that our vault to-night looks almost cheerful by the contrast.”

“ And what were you dreaming of last night, O’Donnell ? ” inquired Henry of his cousin.

“ I dreamt,” replied Hugh Roe, “ that I was standing on the rock of Kilmacrenan, and that John Oge MacSweeny, of the Battleaxes, was with me ; and somehow I thought that all the mountains of Ireland were visible from the spot where we stood, from the Reeks to Magilligan, and from Croagh Patrick to Ben Edar ; but Slieve Gallion stood highest of them all ; and I saw Hugh O’Neill and the Kinel Owen arrayed in order of battle, from one side of the mountain to the other ; and all the free-towns of Ireland were burning brightly in the plain at their feet. But, after that, the sea came between us, and I was sailing, I thought, out of the harbour of Killibegs, in company with the Earl and Manus O’Kane ; and John Oge, with the fosterers, was standing on the beach wringing his hands and lamenting. God knows what it

means; but I think there will be a blow struck out of Ulster yet, and, by Columb Kill, if I could but see the clans once fairly in the field, I should have little fear of ever crossing the sea against my will again."

"I should like well to cross the sea to Spain," said Henry; "I hear that it is a brave country, and we have friends there before us. They say, indeed, that it was out of Spain the old clan Milé came long ago."

"I should rather remain in Ireland," said Art; "though indeed I am told that Santacruz and Madrid are pleasant places to live in; but what is it to a man to be among palaces and gardens every day of his life, if he cannot see the faces of his friends and kindred? To my eye there is nothing in nature so lovely as the sight of one's own people?"

"And yet," replied Henry, "if our own people were to come and see us now, altered as we are by imprisonment and they by sorrow, I question much if they would recognise us or we remember them."

"It would take a strange disguise to make me forget the face of one of my father's nation," said Art; "I should know the well-set eye of one of my race, though it had been wept blind for my misfortunes; I should know the light step of an Ulster man as far as I could see him, though he were walking among a hundred shuffling Saxons."

"I hear the step of a loyal Ulster man just now," said Hugh, as the warden's men were heard coming up the stairs with supper. Turlogh was in attendance as usual; and, after the others had retired, resumed his tale at the request of the expectant princes.

CORBY MAC GILLMORE.

CONCLUSION.

BROTHER VIRGIL first directed his steps to the booth of the wounded outlaw. Here was a scene of sad trepidation and alarm; for Mac Gillmore's fever, aggravated by the excitement of his people's danger, was rapidly increasing.

"Are you making haste with the litter?" he cried impatiently to his attendants, who were busied in the outer apartment framing a rude bier of osiers; "bring it as it is; if it bear my weight it is enough. Would ye keep me here, ye villains, till Mac Seneschal sets fire to my doors?"

"Be patient, my son, be patient," said good Virgil: "the danger is not yet so pressing; I am assured that the wood will not be passable for a full hour at the least, and this over-great anxiety will but increase thy malady."

"How can I be patient," exclaimed the wounded man, "with the deadly enemies of my people waiting only for the fall of a few burning trees to carry fire and sword into the last retreat of our nation? There—by the light of Heaven, I see the reflection of the flames upon the door!"

"Nay, my son, this is but fancy," said the monk; "the smoke of the conflagration is scarce visible even from the brow of the hill; but neither smoke nor flame can reach us here."

"Make haste with the litter!" again cried the wounded man, not attending to the good brother's explanation: "bring me some drink, Mary, and send some one to bring me word from the kindred. King of the Elements!" he exclaimed, raising himself impatiently on his couch as the faint echo of a shout from the woods below fell upon his

ears—"King of the Elements! that I should lie idle here, and the Savages shouting at my door! Bring the litter, ye villains, finished or unfinished! Carry me out in your arms, if ye can do no better!"

"Oh, be patient, be patient, dear Hugh, and they will soon be ready," said the lady, holding the drink to his lips.

"Believe me, chieftain, thou hast still time enough for gaining a place of safety," expostulated brother Virgil.

"Oh, it is not safety that he seeks," cried the lady; "he would be carried forth to head the kindred. Alas! Hugh, with these broken limbs, of what avail will your presence be among the people? You will but encumber them, and put yourself in the way of needless danger. And the exertion alone will ruin you. Oh, do not go! You know that we must retreat sooner or later, and why should you strive to delay a necessity at the risk of your own life? Let us carry you as far, at least, as the top of the hill, where you will be in safety; you know how swiftly they will pursue us when they once break through; and if your bearers be not already in advance, you will never be able to endure the rapidity of our flight."

"When did you ever know me to head a flight, Mary?" said the outlaw: "my place is with the men of the kindred; but do you get ready to join the creaght, and take Harry with you; for we shall have to fire the booths after you leave them, and the further you are from the danger and confusion the better."

"And do you suppose," said the lady, half reproachfully, "that I will leave your side and desert you in this condition?"

"And why should I go with the creaght?" cried the boy: "let the women go on—I will stay with you father."

Before Mac Gillmore could reply, a messenger rushed

in. "What news, Donagh?" cried the chief, rising eagerly on his elbow.

"Owen sent me to hurry off the creaght," replied Donagh; "the wind has risen, and the flames are bearing all before them; the clan Savages' arrows are falling already over the blazing barrier; Tieg Carragh is hurt, and the wind is against us; so that all our shot, so far, have fallen short."

"Lift me into the litter," said Mac Gillmore, less vehemently, as the attendants brought it in. He was raised in their arms and placed on his new bed, not without considerable pain and difficulty; but he did not utter so much as a moan. "Carry me down, my men," he cried with renewed animation as they raised him to their shoulders. "We will see the churl's strength at least, before we take the road. Ah, if I had but the use of my limbs for one hour!—But give me another drink before I go, for my thirst is hotter than fire itself."

"Oh, do not venture beyond the brow of the hill," besought the lady, again ministering the cup to the sick man; "your fever is increasing, and if the crisis overtake you on the road, you will be lost!"

Attending little to the lady's expostulations, Mac Gillmore was borne out on the shoulders of his clansmen; and brother Virgil, prompted as much by interest in his fate as by a curiosity which might for some time be safely gratified, prepared to accompany the procession. "Oh, holy father!" cried the lady, when she perceived the good man's intentions, "do not let him rush into needless danger; speak to him and persuade him to come with us; his presence below can be of no avail; he is in no fit state to issue orders; his eyes are wild and glassy, and he has been already wandering in his mind, until roused by the report of our danger."

"He is, indeed, in burning fever," replied the monk; "but, while thus obstinately bent on his purpose, it would be of no avail to thwart him. Yes I shall go with him, and my best advice and aid shall not be wanting. Meanwhile, dear lady, prepare thyself for flight, for I fear this is like to end in a bloody piece of work," so saying, the good Virgil went forth to view the new dangers of his extraordinary situation.

During the short time he had spent in the chieftain's booth, a fearful change had come over the scene without. The thin, hazy vapour from the burning wood had but a few minutes since been barely visible past the foot of the projecting rocks, amid the flood of ruddy light with which the declining sun filled the space between; but now the sun had sunk behind the intervening mountain, and the cliffs threw their shadow over all the lower region of the hill, where volumes of smoke, both white and heavy, were plainly to be seen rolling from the advancing conflagration like banks of clouds before a stormy sunrise; for the reflection of the flames, although the fire itself was still concealed from view, shot up into the darkened air upon the right, as if a rival of the setting sun were about to burst from the bosom of the woods.

They were now fast approaching the fire itself; showers of embers first proclaimed its vicinity, then came the crackling and rustling of the flame, confusedly heard amid the cries of defiance which at intervals sounded from the combatants on either side, until, on turning the rocky base of the great southern precipice, the whole scene of devastation and approaching strife lay at their feet. The steep front of the hill was clothed, as has been said, with natural forest down to the water's edge. This belt of wood and thicket clasped also the southern declivity of the mountain where it sloped away to the valley which

there stretched somewhat farther inland to the base of another range of hills less advanced towards the coast. It was from this side that the enemies of Mac Gillmore now made their attempt upon his fastness. By dint of severe labour they had cleared themselves a passage through the exterior thickets, and gained the close wood within. But here the axe had failed them. The timber of the main barrier was close and weighty, and a tangled undergrowth of furze and briars rising as high as the lower branches, filled every interstice. The axe had then been cast aside, and the torch applied instead. The substitute had proved successful. A favourable breeze had already carried the flame through more than three parts of the remaining defences, and a practicable way was rapidly opening; for the lighter under-growth was parched as if into touchwood by the heat of summer, and the blaze of its conflagration soon wrapped the heavier green timber in an equal flame. But while the underwood was consumed with the rapidity of stubble, the standing trees burned with a slower and more formidable fire, falling successively with the crash and ruin of numberless branches, and overspreading the ground which had been cleared of its encumbering thicket the moment before, with fresh piles of smouldering and blazing timber. Thus, while the underwood, the original defence, was already cleared from side to side, the standard trees, which had at first been, in comparison, but minor obstacles, remained impassable and unapproachable, like pillars of red-hot iron glowing in the midst of the smoke and blackening ashes, while, from the remains of the burning branches above, a red shower of embers kept falling like incessant flakes of snow.

From where he stood, the good monk could see the assailants in the smoky track behind, busied in clearing

away the logs as they fell, or extinguishing the embers and pressing forward amid smoke and fire, ready to rush in upon their enemies the moment they might be able to pass the few standing trees between. The Muintir Gillmore awaited the incursion under shelter of a ledge of rock that protected them alike from the sweep of the flame and the fall of their antagonists' arrows, which, mixed with the less destructive missiles shot forth by the vehemence of the flame itself, might occasionally be seen rising from the farther verge of the conflagration, and arching the fiery barrier in a flight more rapid than the sparks themselves.

Mac Gillmore cast an eager but unsteady glance at the scene. The hand of fever was strong on him; and he shook from head to foot, as he tried to raise himself, and take a fuller survey of the danger. He gazed a moment, and seemed to observe the position of his men with approbation, but his glance soon grew vacant, and he sank back with a moaning sob of disappointment:—"I am weaker than I thought myself," he murmured; "I can see nothing clearly; yet Owen has placed the kindred well; send him to me—quick, Donagh; or bear me down till I speak with him."

"Send him thither," said the monk, "the chief is too ill at ease to be carried into such a scene."

"No," cried Mac Gillmore, "bear me down; I will die among my people."

"This is the madness of his distemper," said brother Virgil in a low voice to the bearers; "carry him back towards the camp, and I will be your warrant."

"Carry me to the breach, I say," cried the outlaw; and the monk, unable to combat his authority, was reduced to the alternative of either deserting his patient, or of venturing with him into great and gratuitous danger. Benevolence,

however, still supplied the worthy man with courage, and he prepared to descend into the valley with his charge; but they had not proceeded many steps, when Owen Grumagh was seen coming hastily from his company to meet them.

“Tierna,” cried the clansman, advancing to the side of the litter, “by your hand, I beseech you come no farther. We are well able to hold the breach till the kindred get clear of the camp. If you could strike a blow at all, I would never ask Adam Garv’s son to turn back; but, by your head —”

“By my head, and by my father’s head,” cried Mac Gillmore, “I will not turn back while I see my people in the breach before me!” He spoke with renewed energy, and, rallying at the words, again raised himself and looked around. “It is a brave burning,” he said with a ghastly smile; “but I will make a brighter blaze of Dundonald Castle some day yet, ah! *Rìgh na Nul!*” he then exclaimed, extending his clenched hand, and striking it fiercely at the wood, “if I had but the use of my limbs again, how I would trample these dogs of the mountain into their own cinders before an hour! Son of Rory, is there no way of firing the trees behind them and catching them where they stand in a trap of flame?”

“I have tried it twice, Tierna,” replied the clansman; “but none of the kindred could pierce the thickets far enough to windward. Savage has a hot stand of it as it is. He had good need to be shod with iron who would walk in the track of such a fire; though by my hand, I think we shall make him wish for lighter brogues presently.”

“Oh! God, that I could but stand upon my feet!” cried the unhappy outlaw, relapsing into despondency as he sank back from an ineffectual attempt to rise.

"Would to God, that thou hadst called earlier upon his name!" exclaimed brother Virgil.

"What, is the Franciscan there?" muttered Mac Gillmore; "I had lost sight of you, friar, come hither and give me your hand."

The monk placed his hand in that of the outlaw; "I am here by thy side, Chieftain," he said, "and would fain have thee accompany me back to a place of greater safety, for alas! thou art ill fit for such violence as is here approaching."

"Friar," said the outlaw, "I thought that you had deserted me."

"I have been with thee since we left the camp together," replied brother Virgil.

"My memory has been wandering," said Mac Gillmore vacantly; "I am not sure how I came to be here; but, friar, do not let the Bantierna wait for me."

"I promised to her not to return without thee," said the monk.

The outlaw made no immediate reply, but grasping the Franciscan's hand, he muttered shortly after, "I am glad you christened the boy; it is what I should wish to have done to myself."

"Glory be to God!" exclaimed the pleased ecclesiastic, readily overlooking any incoherency in language so unexpectedly pious; "it is never too late to choose the better course; if Heaven but spare us out of this present peril, I will baptize thee, my son, before another day of darkness shall have passed over thy head."

"This is no time for practising your spells, Gilly Francisagh," interrupted Owen Grunagh sternly; "but for your idle incantations the kindred would never have been taken in this surprise."

"But for your sins and sacrileges, son of Rory," retorted

the Franciscan, "you would not have had enemies to surprise you."

"What smoke is that?" suddenly exclaimed Mac Gillmore, in suppressed but hurried accents: the bearers stared at one another: "there is a strong smell of fire," muttered the sick man in the same rapid under-tone; "they have set fire to the church door: Owen Grumnagh, why did you fire the church? You will burn no priest with my consent—the prior's blood's enough—the prior's blood's enough!"

"Oh God, be merciful to the poor delirious sinner!" prayed the monk, while those around stood half incredulous, and still subdued by the presence of their chieftain.

"Let him go," muttered the outlaw again; "I say there has been blood enough shed."

"Whom would you have us to let go, Tierna?" asked Owen Grumnagh; but Mac Gillmore drew back, shuddering as the clansman bent over him: "Keep back, keep back," he cried; "I have no quarrel with you, Raymond Mac Seneschal!"

"He is raving," said the clansman; "he takes me for a man who is dead these two years."

"Son of Rory, what is to be done?" asked the Franciscan, now greatly alarmed; for at the moment a heavy fall of timber sounded from the fast sinking barrier, while a sheet of flame and embers burst into the sky, with a glare so strong as to overcome the remaining light of day, and redden the mountain on all sides, as with the momentary reflection of a sea of blood.

"That was the roof that fell in," cried Mac Gillmore, recurring in his delirium to the vision of the burning church; "how the flames growl and crackle among the rafters; did ye hear how the young priest screamed from under the blazing king-post? will no one pull him out?"

he is writhing under the beam like a crushed worm. Ah ! put him out of pain, put him out of pain !” Another crash from the falling forest and a whirling drift of embers that fell round and among them, prevented brother Virgil from hearing more of his unhappy patient’s ravings.

“Mac Gillmore must be carried back,” cried Owen ; “go with him, Gilly Francisagh, and prepare the Bantierna for the worst. I must waste no time dallying here while Black Alan is advancing on us step for step. Farewell then, friar, but wait till you see us driven back to the foot of Carrick Mac Art before you quit the camp. Now then, Donagh,” he cried, turning to the young clansman at his side, “we will go down and stand together for the kindred, like true men ; and Donagh, never let me fall alive into the hands of Clanna-Chriost, as you would be a true gossip to my father’s son.”

“By sun and wind,” replied Donagh, grasping his hand, “I will be a true gossip to you this night, come life or death !” then turning with his companion, descended to the scene of approaching action.

The bearers of Mac Gillmore’s litter now turned their faces from the breach, and began to retrace their steps towards the camp. Twilight was already darkening down, and, where the inequalities of the ground they had to cross, occasionally excluded the light of the burning woods from their path, they moved in gloomy darkness. The cries of the hostile troops behind, and the faint tumult of the camp ahead, reaching them alternately, as they rose or descended, filled their minds with alarm and melancholy apprehensions. All were silent save the unhappy sufferer himself, who, unconscious of what was passing around him, continued to mutter his incoherent fancies in the same rapid and monotonous undertone.

It was impossible to contemplate without a shudder, the forlorn condition of one who so shortly before had had been the stay and protection of his people, thus assailed by fire and sword, in the same hour that torture of body and the weakness of fever left him unable to repel or even to comprehend the approaching danger. Alarmed and agitated more and more, as he considered with himself the actual peril in which he stood, the conspicuous and awful judgments exhibited on every side, and the possibility, however remote, of his own vain glory and ambition having had a part in provoking them, brother Virgil walked by the sick man's side with more wretched feelings than he had ever experienced before. As often as their path commanded a view of the conflagration, he would turn with a sick heart, expecting to see the fiery gap crowded with enemies, for he could not reconcile it to his imagination, that they who were now approaching could be friends to him, yet vowed exterminators at the same time, of those with whom he was so strangely associated. "Alas!" thought he, "in the darkness and confusion of such a strife, how can I hope that men with weapons in their hands will wait to examine the dress or aspect of their antagonists? and whither can we fly? these inland fastnesses are surely not more impregnable than they considered this to be—and this, what is it but a trap where they will be taken like ensnared beasts of chase? Oh holy and blessed Francis, look down on thy distressed servant! I know not which way to turn, or whither to betake myself!"

A louder shout than had yet sounded from the woods, now interrupted his painful meditations, and, on looking round, the affrighted monk at last saw the realization of all he had dreaded—an irruption of armed men pouring in a dense column through the breach, and joining hand

to hand in battle with the Muintir Gillmore, on the very verge of the spent conflagration; these striving to thrust their assailants back into the flames on either hand, and others struggling to make their escape out of the narrow furnace up which they had rushed to the assault. "Press on, press on!" cried the monk to the panting bearers of the litter, himself scarcely less exhausted. "Oh, make speed, my friends, and hasten, or they will be upon us! they are pouring through like a torrent! the brands are trampled into ashes under their feet! the flames are like walls of fire on each side of them. Alas! it is as though the pit itself were vomiting forth its legions!"

The increased clamour had reached the ears of the sick man also. "They are coming down from the king's castle," he exclaimed; "they are coming down the main street with horse and foot—don't wait to search the prior's house—it is iron we want; we have enough of gold and silver. Ay, down with it, down with it; the bars are worth a king's ransom to me—bring crows and hammers—tear it down at any cost; no matter for the breaking of the glass; it is the iron we have need for, and the staunchcons are of hammered iron!"

"Jesu Maria! he thinks he is at the plundering of our chapel," exclaimed the monk; "he is acting over his sacrilege, while God is avenging it! he thinks that it is but the painted oriel of our church that he has torn away, while Heaven, with wind and fire for its avengers, is dragging down the last bulwark of his own fastness! Oh God, how wondrous are Thy ways; how fearfully is wickedness by Thy hands made the instrument of its own punishment! Oh, friends, hurry on! we are scarce yet half way; and your kindred cannot long resist that onset: blessed Francis, they rush upon us through fire and smoke, like the infernal ministers of vengeance!"

"Make haste, make haste," repeated one of the foremost bearers; "I see them issuing from the camp to urge us on."

"It is the Bantierna coming to meet us," replied his supporter; "and Harry Oge is with her; I saw them plainly in the last flash from the breach below."

"We carry them a doleful burthen," said the other; "but better this than when we brought home Adam Garv from the breach of Lisnagarvy; see, they are approaching us: shall we set down the litter?"

"No time for stopping now," cried the leader briefly; then, raising his voice, he cried to the lady, "Turn back, Bantierna; Clan Savage has passed the breach, and we are bound for the hill with what speed we may."

But the lady only came forward the faster:—"Is Mac Gillmore safe?" she cried, pressing forward to the side of the litter, and eagerly bending over its wretched occupant.

"He is safe, daughter, for the present," replied the monk; "but his malady has been sorely aggravated by these luckless efforts: I trust, however, that if he can be borne to a place of safety before midnight, he may yet recover."

But the sick man's ravings only increased. "Oh, dear Hugh," cried the lady stooping to wipe his brow, as his mind wandered from one horror to another, unconscious of her presence; "only speak to me, and say that you know I am by your side—it is I, Hugh, it is your own Mary that is with you. Alas, God help me! he does not even know the sound of my voice!"

"Daughter," said brother Virgil, "it is sinful to repine while any hope is left; thou mayest still escape, and Mac Gillmore may still recover: let the bearers carry him forward, and we will accompany them as far in advance of thy people's retreat as our time permits: are

thy fastnesses in the interior such as will afford security when gained ? ”

“ They will give shelter for a time,” replied the lady, mournfully, “ to the few who may escape the sword to-night ; but, father, you are forgetful of your own safety in anxiety for ours. It is time that you took shelter either in the caves, or on the skirts of the wood below, until the confusion shall be passed, when your people will be safe of approach ; for if you remain among us, angry men such as these are, may not wait to make distinctions among those who come in their way.”

“ But it is not my design to await their coming, lady,” said the monk.

“ Then you must abandon our dangerous society without delay,” she replied ; “ for I fear that we have but a few minutes left for our last preparations. Your safest path is to the right : you can await the issue in security anywhere out of arrow range. If you can win your people to mercy on such children of our nation as may fall into their hands, we shall bless you for your charitable advocacy. Farewell, father,” she continued, extending her hand, while her broken accents attested the depth of her emotion ; “ farewell—may the blessings of the Christian’s mother go with you ! If my child be but spared me,” and she drew the boy closer to her side ; “ if God spare him longer to us, I will teach him to pray for the good priest who came to save him and his people. I would to God I could offer you better protection,” she continued, perceiving that brother Virgil still delayed ; “ but, alas, I can only pray you, as you value your own safety, to avoid us ; yet believe me we are not ungrateful : all the remaining spoils of your priory shall be returned before noon to-morrow.”

“ Lady,” said the Franciscan firmly, “ thou dost mis-

take my errand and my purpose : I came to preach the gospel of peace among thy people ; and if war have for a time interrupted the good work, I am not on that account to abandon it. I have taken my resolve, daughter : I will not leave the Clan Gillmore in their trouble."

"But, dear father," said the lady, "you know not what hardships and privations are before us : we have no means of lodging you as becomes your station in the woods. You are unaccustomed to the fatigue of such journeys as our people must make from day to day. I well know what a comfort it would be to have the minister of peace and righteousness among them ; but, holy father, we have no right to look for that blessing, while we are by our own wickedness deprived of the means of enjoying it. Leave us, father : you have done all that Christian zeal and piety can do for our aid : if God has decreed that we should be outcasts be it so : you, at least, have done nothing to participate in His displeasure."

"Daughter," said the good man, "it is sinful to give way to this despondency. God has not abandoned you ; do not urge me to abandon Him. It is for the good of my own soul as well as of yours that I go with you into this wilderness. I came hither, God forgive me ! too much on the selfish and unworthy impulse of ambition, hoping to gain worldly glory as the wages of my service to the Church ; and worthily indeed have I gained the wages of my desecrated office in shame and in disappointment. It has been my own fault that I have failed : my punishment, I trust, has taught me purer motives. If God spare me I am ready to make the trial again in a spirit worthier, I would fain hope, of success ; and I doubt not but that if it please Him to favour my errand,

I shall be enabled to endure whatever sufferings we shall have to encounter."

Brother Virgil's determination had sprung up irresistibly in his own bosom almost while announcing it. It was not until the lady urged him to take measures for his separate security, that the baseness of such a desertion had appeared to him in its full extent. Knowledge of his unworthiness had humbled him in his own estimation long before; but it was not till he felt the lady's unintentional reproach—when she enumerated the difficulties which seemed to obstruct the path of such a man as he had heretofore shown himself—that he became also conscious of the new strength which that humility had imparted. In a word, the good man felt himself impelled to a nobler exercise of duty, and, if his heart secretly whispered that a corresponding reward of self-approbation awaited its performance, it was only one of a number of motives, none more natural, although some might boast of higher origin.

His purpose announced, and no room left for further hesitation, the excellent man proceeded to assist in all the final preparation of his friends; and when, having at length gained the pathway, where quadrupeds could pick a footing, they transferred the sick chief from the shoulders of his clansmen to a larger horse litter, brother Virgil aided in spreading the cloaks and drawing the curtains round his patient; and when on finally departing, each man placed a lighted turf under the thatch of his deserted dwelling, brother Virgil might be seen entering booth after booth, though the tide of war was now rolling louder and nearer every moment, to see that no infants or bedridden elders had been left behind, that no cattle remained fastened in their devoted stables, and that no necessary

stores which might be carried away had been neglected.

But there was now no longer time for circumspection ; darkness had set in ; the train of cattle had long since filed through the narrow pass to the top and back of the hill ; the women and children were following in their track, and the escort of the chief, bringing up the rear of the cavalcade, had next to set forward. Towards the scene of battle, every thing gave token of rapidly approaching danger. Scout after scout rushed in to urge the loiterers on their journey. Owen Grumagh, unable to resist the multitude of his assailants, had fallen back from pass to pass, and was now with difficulty holding the enemy at bay, at a distance of scarce three arrow flights. The good Franciscan was mounted hastily on his own mule, and hurried forward with the rest. He found the lady and her son in a conveyance similar to that which bore Mac Gillmore. The two litters proceeded side by side so long as the breadth of the road permitted, but when they had ascended about half way to the pass, those bearing the chieftain had to fall back and let the lady s take the lead up the narrow pathway. Meantime the conflict resounded louder and fiercer from behind ; every moment brought the battle nearer, and at length in the light from the now blazing booths on one hand, and from the burning woods upon the other, the combatants themselves appeared in sight. "On, on !" was now the cry from every mouth. "The kindred are flying ; the Clan Savage are driving them like sheep before them ! They will be among us before we pass the gap —hasten, hasten !"

"Who is it that stops the way ?" exclaimed some one in front.

"Back, back ! or you will choke the pass !" replied another.

"Forward, I say, or Mac Gillmore and the Bantierna will be cut off!" next cried a guard or leader from behind.

"King of the Elements! we are crushed to death! hold back as you would not trample over us!" again sounded in shrill accents from the head of the column, eliciting new shouts of "Way for the Tierna Mor!—way for the Bantierna!"—and these again responded to by frantic cries:—"We cannot make way without slipping from the pathway; turn back yourselves, if ye be men, and face the enemy!"—"Tis hopeless now: we cannot make another stand till we pass the gap."—"Jesu Maria! their arrows are falling close to us already!"

The last was the exclamation of brother Virgil, who now perceived with dismay that the path a-head was so choked with fugitives crowding on one another, as to prevent the possibility of advance, at least for some time, while the approaching multitude of combatants, now fearfully near, and so intermingled in the uncertain light, as scarce to be distinguishable into their respective parties, cut off all retreat, and almost made the situation of the outlaws desperate; for they were pent up on a narrow strip of greensward, with a sheer descent on one hand, and an overhanging precipice upon the other, and, should their assailants succeed in pushing their advantage but a little further, would be exposed to the deliberate aim of the enemy's archers from all the heights around. Random arrows were already whistling overhead, and many of the fugitives, pushed from the path, were scrambling along the side, or rolling helpless to the bottom of the ravine beneath.

In the midst of this disastrous confusion, brother Virgil suddenly found himself side by side with the lady, who, having dismounted from her litter to attend the sick chieftain, during the pause, was now unable to regain

her place, and stood patiently awaiting her fate among the hindmost. "Mac Gillmore is safe," she said, in answer to the monk's hopeless glance of inquiry; "they bore him forward by main force."

"And, dear lady, why didst thou not accompany him?" asked brother Virgil.

"It shall never be said," she replied, "that I saved myself at the expense of my husband's people; they could not have borne me onward without trampling over those in front."

"And the boy, lady?"

"Thank God, he is safe also; they placed him beside Mac Gillmore in the litter. Now that they are out of danger, I care not so much for myself; but would to God, father, you had never remained among us, for I fear this night will end badly for us all."

"It is a fearful adventure surely," cried the good monk, as he was pushed to and fro, in the tumult of a renewed alarm, for the band which had so long protected their retreat was again broken before the enemy, and forced to another position, still closer on their rear.

Desperate efforts were now made by the fugitives to force a passage, but the gap became only more impassable the more it was crowded; many threw themselves down the steep declivity, in the hope of making their way, by separate paths, to the woods, but the arrows of Clan Savage arrested the flight of some, and others, falling headlong, lay crushed among the rocks, or clung midway to scattered tufts of grass and brushwood on the bank. At length, however, the column began, once more, to move forward, but scarce was the door of safety thus opened to those in front, when the rear-guard, after debating every inch of ground to within an arrow's flight of their friends, was finally beaten back, broken and

driven in pell-mell, on the hindmost fugitives. The unfortunate Franciscan in vain invoked the saints, in vain he cried that he was a Christian priest—Savages and Gillmores fighting hand to hand poured round him with the sweep of a torrent; he was whirled about like a straw in an eddy. One glimpse he caught, and no more, of Owen Grumagh, all bloody and begrimed, beset with enemies, and staggering under innumerable blows, yet still facing his antagonists, and crying to his kinsmen to stand by him, and fight it out. He saw no more, for the light suddenly left his eyes, and he fell from his mule under a blow, received he knew not whence, but weighty enough to deprive him for the time of all sensation.

When the luckless monk regained consciousness he found himself lying on the ground, much bruised, and suffering great pain. It was not without considerable difficulty that he rallied his senses so far as to recollect what had happened; and when at length he grew fully conscious of his situation, nothing could exceed the anguish that took possession of him—natural sorrow for the mischance of his adopted friends, horror of the scene of carnage around, the sense of utter bereavement when he considered that those on whom his dearest hopes had been fixed were now dispersed and gone for ever; all this, joined to the pain of his wound, and the dread that death was approaching, conspired to fill the poor man's heart with feelings of intense misery. Nothing doubting that the blow which had prostrated him was dealt by the sword or axe, and confusedly sensible of general pain, he lay for a minute half afraid to raise his hand to his head, or to make what he dreaded would be the ineffectual attempt to rise to his feet. At length, however, finding that, save a painful contusion on the back of his head, there was no wound which the hand could detect, and

that, although stiff and painful, his limbs had not lost their power of motion ; he slowly rose to his knees, and, relieved of his apprehensions, looked around. He was in the bottom of the ravine, whither he had rolled, having been pushed from the path above by the feet of the trampling combatants. The reflection of the fires still played upon the gaunt wall of rock above, but in the deep hollow all was dark and melancholy. The fugitives had either fallen or were gone, for the pathway was occupied by the assailants only, and it seemed as if the Muintir Gillmore had once more made good a position beyond the narrow pass above, for the sound of strife still rose from among the rocks, and the halt of troops midway upon the ascent appeared to indicate a repulse.

Brother Virgil had scarce observed so much, and returned thanks to God for his unhopèd-for escape, when his ever prompt benevolence was excited by a low moan issuing from a clump of brushwood beside him. Rising on the first summons of charity, though his feeble limbs almost refused their burthen, the good man tottered forward in the direction whence the sound proceeded. The dark reflection of the light from above showed him a prostrate figure half sunk among the heath ; he bent down, and gazing narrowly, perceived that it was a woman. She was moaning pitifully, and the monk, when he stooped to lift her, felt his hands wet with blood.

“Do not move me,” faintly articulated the wounded woman—“I am dying—friend, send me the Franciscan priest, if he be among your people, for the love of God.”

“Alas ! alas ! my daughter, is it thus that I find thee ?” exclaimed brother Virgil, forgetting his own wretchedness in deep and painful commiseration, for it was the hapless Bantierna herself who lay before him, pierced with an arrow, and panting forth her life on the en-

anguined earth. Kneeling down beside her, the good monk would have tried to draw the arrow out of her breast, but she prayed that he would not pain her by the hopeless attempt. "I am fast approaching my deliverance," she whispered; "render me the rites of the Church, dear father, and I shall die contented."

"Blessed be God, who has sent me to thee in this good time!" exclaimed the pious man; and perceiving that her last breath was nearly drawn, he hastened to administer the long lost consolations of her religion, with earnest and affectionate zeal. When the solemn rite was ended, the lady, who had been supported in the arms of her kneeling confessor, sank back heavily to the earth, and the Franciscan for a moment thought that the last struggle was over; but perceiving shortly after that her hand moved, as if to claim his attention, he bent down, and holding his head near her face, caught some imperfect request connected with a benediction on her child, whose name was the last word that the ill-fated lady uttered.

Bending over the lifeless clay, brother Virgil long knelt, forgetful of all but the absorbing presence of calamity and resignation greater than his own. "Alas!" he cried, "why should I murmur at the pains and disappointments with which it has pleased Heaven to try me, when this daughter of affliction, without better aid or counsel than the feeble exhortations of a sinner like myself, has turned her grief into rejoicing, and gained the victory over death? Surely my mission has not been unavailing, when one soul, at least, by my ministration, is soaring through the gates of Paradise. Glory to God and the blessed Francis! I repine no longer at aught that I have suffered; and yet the flesh is weak to bear these pains and bruises—but, out upon thee, Fergall Mac

Naughten! dost thou complain of wounds and bruises, yet seek to share the joy of Him who died upon the tree?"

"*Benedicite*, brother, whom shrive you?" suddenly demanded some one coming up behind him; and the Franciscan, raising his head, beheld with astonishment that he was addressed by an ecclesiastic. The new comer was attended by several men at arms, one of whom bore a torch, by the light of which the monk recognised a well-known dignitary of the Church.

"*Deus vobiscum, Domine reverendissime*," said brother Virgil, rising painfully to his feet, "your Lordship has found me in a time of great danger and tribulation."

"Glory to the blessed Comgall of Bangor," cried the stranger, who, although panting and spent for breath, for he was advanced in years, and of unusual corpulency, had cordially embraced the monk the moment he recognised him. "It is Virgil, the son of Naughten, the Minorite brother, whom we all deemed murdered by the pagan!—tell us, brother, how thou hast escaped; the heathen held thee to ransom, I conclude, else had we never rescued thee, as we have done this day. Oh! holy Comgall, it hath been a fearful, but a glorious day for the Church!—we have scattered the heathen before us, even as Joshua smote the Amorite from Gilgal to Beth-horon!"

Brother Virgil shuddered; but he had no need to make further reply, for the Abbot's attention was arrested by the torch-bearer, a rough man-at-arms, who stooping down to look at the dead body, let his torch drop in sudden amazement, and drew back, exclaiming, "By the bells of Bangor it is my Lady Mary risen from the grave!"

No sooner did the Abbot hear the words than he

snatched up the nearly extinguished torch, and cast a hurried glance at the dead lady's features; uttering a deep exclamation, he laid his hand upon the shoulder of the man who had recognised her first, and imposing silence by a significant look on him, as well as on brother Virgil, he commanded the rest of the guard to withdraw.

"Tell Sir Alan," he cried, "to hold his hand, and hasten hither, for that I have something weighty and urgent to impart to him. Friar," he then said, in a lower voice, turning to the Minorite, "how is this?—we heard that she died of fever last autumn."

"Last autumn," muttered the man-at-arms; "the report with us, my lord, has been that the Lady Mary was drowned by mischance in the *pool dhu*, this time nine years."

"Stephen," said the Abbot, in a reproving, yet conciliatory tone, "events sometimes occur in noble families which make many reports necessary that might otherwise be well dispensed with. Whatever thou mayest see or hear to-night, it is for the honour of thy Lord and his House that thou confine it to thine own bosom, and Stephen Chamberlayne, it may also be for the good of thine own soul, to mark well and obey my injunctions, as it assuredly will be at the peril both of soul and body that thou infringingest on the least of my commands in this matter."

"I never failed the Seneschal, my lord," replied the soldier, "whenever his honour or his safety was concerned; but, by my hand, if I had thought that my young lady was among them to-night I should have struck no stroke against Clan Gillmore in your lordship's quarrel."

"The quarrel is not more mine than thy lord's, sirrah,"

replied the Abbot; "and what, though it were?—it is a work acceptable to God, at all times, to root out the pagan; and it would be thy duty, as the vassal of thy master, who is the vassal of the Church, to aid in that blessed and pious service, even though thine own father were leagued with the infidel! I tell thee, sirrah, we deemed her dead long since. we had certain tidings that she perished in the pestilence which overtook her accursed kindred last autumn in the woods. Be discreet, Stephen Chamberlayne, there must be no scandal to a noble family through thy imprudence."

"God help us, God help us! it is a strange world to live in!" was the old man's only reply.

"A strange and a sinful world," said the Abbot, "and full of unnatural wickedness and lewdness. She fled from her home among friends and Christians to be the paramour of a wandering and sacrilegious pagan. Why should her people proclaim her shame and apostacy? I hold the deceit they practised, when they would rather have the world believe her dead than dishonoured, to have been both prudent and praiseworthy."

Brother Virgil felt his indignation rise at hearing the luckless lady's memory so defamed, but he knew he could not altogether justify her, and he was conscious of the difficulty of even palliating her conduct without entering on a full relation of all he knew: but while he stood still undetermined whether to speak out or wait a fitter opportunity, the guard who had been dispatched to summon the man most interested in his disclosures, announced Sir Alan Mac Seneschal's approach, and the Abbot, signing to the man-at-arms to cover the body with his cloak, turned to meet the terrible chieftain.

Black Alan descended into the hollow, attended by torchbearers. "What would you?" he shouted as he

came down, his armour flashing in the red light, and his voice hoarse with rage and impatience.

"Thy counsel, my son, on a matter which concerns thee nearly," replied the Abbot.

"It had need, by saint Columb," cried the fiery warrior, "for I have left my people at a time when I can ill be spared: the powers of hell are on the villain's side!—we are repulsed!—the pagan dog has escaped me, and if we cannot force the gap before an hour we may give up the pursuit—what is the matter in hand, then, quick, my lord."

The Abbot motioned to those around to withdraw, and, when left alone with Sir Alan, the man-at-arms, and brother Virgil, he addressed the chief:—"We have been deceived, my son, in the tidings that came to us last autumn regarding thy unhappy sister."

"Staff of St. Patrick, remember these are private matters!" exclaimed the chief, reddening to the eyes to find his family's dishonour mentioned in the presence of his vassal.

"The facts are known to both," said the Abbot, indicating the involuntary confidants by a significant glance, while Alan, comprehending him at once, but uncertain what was to be done, regarded the Franciscan and his companion with looks of ominous suspicion. "They are both aware of the misfortunes of thy House, my son," replied the Abbot, "but we can trust implicitly in their good faith. I told thee we were deceived in the report of the unhappy woman's death."

"I care not," replied Alan, hoarsely, "I have no part in her, she is no sister of mine," but he turned pale as he spoke, and his startled eyes with sufficient eagerness asked the question to which his tongue refused to give utterance.

"I grieve to say it, my son," said the Abbot, "she has found a more violent death than we hoped had been vouchsafed to her,"—his eyes as he spoke rested on the dark object at his feet. The dreadful truth seemed to flash at once on the mind of Black Alan; without a word he pushed the Franciscan aside, and making one stride towards the body, grasped the skirt of the mantle and drew it back, but he stayed his hand almost as soon as he stretched it forth; the pale features, as they emerged from their covering in all the rigid calmness of death; the sight of his sister, face to face, was not to be confronted without emotion even by his stern and revengeful spirit. He stood with staring eyeballs, and distended nostrils, the cloak still clutched in his hand, and his body bent forward as if spell-bound; while those around, subdued by the scene, kept silence. At length, drawing a hard breath and letting the cloak fall from his relaxed grasp, he turned aside exclaiming, in a voice half choked with emotion, "Mother of God! who could have thought that it would have come to this!"

"Her's has been a wretched fate," said the Abbot; "but what better fate has ever yet attended apostacy and sacrilege?"

"Oh, my lord," exclaimed the good Virgil, roused at length and full of zealous indignation, "her faults have scarce deserved such censure. If she strayed from the fold she came back to it before nightfall—if her lot was cast with the heathen, she knew not among whom she went till too late to return to her own kindred. Oh, my lord, thou who didst thyself wed her to that lawless man, forced though thou wert to the reluctant service, canst vouch to this noble gentleman, her brother, that she hath never stained his name or her honour. I who confessed, and on this very spot absolved her, can testify, before

Christendom, that, whatever may have been the crimes and impious practices of her husband and his people, she died as she had lived, a penitent and faithful daughter of the Church. The waters of baptism wherewith, at her most earnest instance, her only child hath been this day made a citizen of Christ's heavenly kingdom, are scarce yet dry upon these hands, stained though they now be with her innocent blood. Oh ! my lord, and thou Sir Alan Savage, ye little thought, when bearing fire and sword into the retreat of those whilome God-forsaken men, that ye were robbing the Church of many hearty penitents, already eager, even through my poor ministration, to escape from the bondage of Satan, and to embrace the Gospel in sincerity and truth—ye little deemed, when imbruing the sword in the blood of babes and women, that your victims had been startled from the baptismal font where but another hour of security, and their precious souls might have been saved from that perdition into which your hands this night have plunged them eternally ! Behold this unhappy lady who lies before you : ten years of shame and sorrow she has borne as the punishment of one hour's fatal folly ; for ten years she has sought, with unavailing efforts, to instruct and civilize her barbarous kindred, teaching mercy to men on whom ye have shown no mercy, tenderly ministering to the wants of men whom ye have made desolate, grieving over the wickedness of those whom she could not restrain, and meekly enduring the wrongs and contumely of those whom she could not appeal to."

Exhausted with fatigue and excitement, the good monk could say no more : carried on by an honest impulse he had far overtopped the bounds which discretion would have set to his speech on any ordinary occasion, and his temerity called down a corresponding denunciation from

the affronted Abbot. "Presumptuous priest," exclaimed that angry dignitary, so soon as surprise and confusion would permit him to avail himself of the pause in brother Virgil's invective, "dost thou set thyself up to judge between the Church and her sacrilegious enemies?—What! are impious and infidel outlaws to plunder our houses, pillage and burn our churches, and put unoffending servants of the saints to cruel and ignominious deaths upon God's very altar with impunity? Are the avengers of wasted abbey lands, of convents and cathedrals levelled with the ground, of innumerable families of monks and nuns dispersed and driven forth upon the world, to hold back their hands from the punishment commanded of God to be inflicted on his enemies, because a disaffected, and, I fear me much, heretical friar hath profaned the mysteries of his religion by proclaiming them in their brutish ears? What! is the arch-rebel both to Church and King, the excommunicated and bloodstained heathen, Hugh Mac Gillmore, to escape the wrath of an offended Heaven because his wretched paramour——"

"Hold, Abbot!" cried Black Alan, who had stood with a countenance changing like the varying hues of a thundercloud as he listened to the passionate appeal of the Franciscan, "hold there!" he exclaimed, suddenly and sternly, "what was it, Minorite, you said of this lady having been wedded to Mac Gillmore?"

"I said," replied brother Virgil, "and I call upon this proud churchman to vouch for what I state, that Mac Gillmore forced the Abbot of Bangor to perform a marriage between him and this luckless lady in the woods that very night she left her father's castle with him; and I say further, and the Abbot knows it well, that that was either a true marriage, or that he who celebrated it is forsworn——"

"I was forced to both," exclaimed the Abbot, reddening with anger and confusion; "I was forced to both, and neither oath nor marriage can be binding."

"What oath? what marriage? why have I not been told of this before?" demanded Black Alan, impetuously striding towards his astonished ally.

"I was forced, I say," exclaimed the Abbot, "I was forced at the sword's point to celebrate a marriage, and to swear that it was binding. Wherefore should I proclaim the indignity they had put upon me?"

"Villain!" cried Black Alan, bursting into a paroxysm of rage, "how hast thou dared to defame my father's daughter?" and so great was his transport of indignation that he would have laid violent hands upon the terrified churchman but for the intervention of the Franciscan and the man-at-arms.

"Oh, noble sir," cried brother Virgil, "respect his sacred office! remember that the persons of God's ministers are inviolable; he doubtless believed that a ceremony so celebrated was void, else he would surely have informed thee of it."

"No, by the light of heaven," exclaimed Savage, "I well know now why he kept that marriage a secret from me? You dreaded the loss of my galloglass and stout men-at-arms, priest," he cried, turning fiercely on the Abbot; "you feared unless I was stimulated by shame as well as injury that we would no longer fight the battles of your cowardly brotherhood as we have done, till father and brother and sister have fallen sacrifices to your sordid ends! Ho, Stephen Chamberlayne, sound the retreat to Clan Savage, both galloglass and kern: let the Church fight her own battles; I have no quarrel with any man of Kinel Gillmore, save one, and I will choose my own time and place to keep the vow I am under in that regard.

Sound the retreat, I say: let the churls pursue Clan Gilmore into Massareen and Kilultagh if they list. As for me, by Heaven, my brain is on fire with the unfounded thoughts of dishonour that have haunted me for years! And you—you, churl of a churchman, you, villain priest, you are the man that urged me on!"

"Art thou mad, Sir Alan? art thou possessed of devils? hast no fear of God before thy eyes?" ejaculated the Abbot, drawing back in ill-concealed trepidation, step by step, as his furious accuser advanced upon him, a stride nearer at every indignant sentence. But brother Virgil, alarmed by the menacing aspect of the knight, again threw himself between, and besought the Abbot to leave them. "I go," cried the enraged ecclesiastic; "I go, Sir Alan Savage; but by cross and bell I swear I will make thee rue these insults, if there be thunders in the storehouse of the Church! And thou friar, it will go hard with me if I unfrock thee not ere long for this night's insolence!"

"Go!" cried Alan, scornfully; "go, my Lord Abbot of Bangor! but," he added, in a voice of thunder, "by Sun and Wind *I* swear that if you practice any mummary against me——"

"Oh, sir, do not blaspheme!" exclaimed the shocked Franciscan.

"What care I?" replied Black Alan, recklessly. "Were he the priest of Crom himself, I would not be duped by him!"

"Of Crom?" repeated brother Virgil. "Thou wouldst not say that the priest of a pagan idol hath any right to reverence?"

"No; nor the false priest of any God!" replied Black Alan.

"There is no God but one" said Virgil, solemnly;

"and He hath said, Thou shalt have no other gods but me."

"Be it so, be it so," cried the chief, impatiently; "these are your concerns; my business is with mortals." So saying, he turned and walked back towards the corpse. He stood looking fixedly at the dead body for some time, then said, "Let her have Christian burial. She was the first lady of her House that ever bore reproach; and now—to think that it has been undeserved"—he stopped short, and it was evident that remorse was rising at his heart.

"My son," said the good Virgil, eager to improve the opportunity of inculcating better feelings, "thou didst doubtless play a cruel part by her; but thou wast deceived, and knewest not thine own injustice; so that perchance, with due repentance, thou mayest still be absolved of Heaven, as I can truly bear witness thou hast been already fully pardoned by the wrong but gentle-hearted and most forgiving lady."

"What? Did she say she forgave me?" asked Alan, in a voice of great surprise, but low and shaken.

"With almost the last breath she drew she prayed to God to turn thy heart, and pardon thee, even as she had pardoned thee," replied the monk.

"If I could think that she was led astray," said Alan, struggling with increased emotion.

"Surely she was deceived," cried brother Virgil, eagerly improving his success. "Mac Gillmore gained her love under another name. She knew not whom she went among until too late to return. I can vouch for it on mine own knowledge: the outlaw wooed her as one of the MacRory's of Kilwarlin."

Natural affection had by this assumed full sway in the breast of the repentant chieftain. "Mary!" he ex-

claimed, in dreadful agitation, stooping to take the dead woman by the hand; "Mary, my sister, we have wronged you foully and unnaturally"—but the words were scarcely pronounced, when he started back with a countenance of unutterable horror and dismay; for, in withdrawing the mantle, he had bared her breast, where the fatal weapon was still planted, and the feathered extremity of the arrow protruding from the wound at once arrested his eye with some horrible token of despair.

"Oh Jesu! what new calamity have we here?" exclaimed the monk, appealing to Stephen Chamberlayne, who at the moment came running up, in sudden alarm. The man-at-arms cast one glance of inquiry at his master and one blank look of dismay on the corpse; then smote his thighs with his hands, and burst into incoherent exclamations of horror and commiseration. But the chief, seizing him by the arm, with the gripe of a maniac, gasped—"Stephen!—who—who to-night, besides myself, shot with my Flemish cross-bow?—answer!—speak!—King of the Elements! did any one else shoot with it?"

"God forgive us!—none—none—none!" cried the terrified retainer.

Black Alan's countenance from the paleness of death grew livid with despair. "Then I am the most accursed man that lives!" he exclaimed: "I have murdered my own sister, who ought never to have had unkindness at my hands! After this I need never look upon the light of heaven! My doom is fixed: I am a wanderer henceforth. Let house and land fall to the portion of the wolves!—let kith and kin go to beggary and perdition! Hell has risen up against me, and the powers of hell pursue me evermore!" With these dreadful words upon his lips he rushed into the darkness, holding his clenched hands before his head; and ere the astonished monk or

his companion could follow with their torch, was out of sight.

"Stop him, stop him!" shouted brother Virgil, at the top of his voice; "stop him! he hath gone mad!" but, spent and bruised, and scarce able to sustain his own weight, he was soon fain to give up so hopeless an attempt, and leave to Stephen Chamberlayne to continue the pursuit alone. But Stephen was a man advanced in years, urged only by duty and attachment; while Black Alan, young and vigorous, swept down the dark declivity like an arrow from his own fatal bow, winged by despair and madness. Many of the troops, alarmed by the cries of the man-at-arms already hopeless of overtaking the maniac chieftain, hastened down the hill, thinking that a new attack was there approaching; but before the foremost of them had reached half-way to the burning wood, Alan had plunged through or into the flames, no man knew which; and the Clan Savage suddenly found themselves in the clouds of night, hard by their enemy, without a leader, and in doubt whether they might not be again in action within an hour.

All was consternation, hurry, and tumult. The offended abbot had drawn off his force of church vassals, and had taken up a separate position. The person next in command, not understanding the cause of Black Alan's sudden disappearance, hesitated to take any decisive step, lest the chief should return and countermand it. Brother Virgil, exhausted, wearied, sick at heart, could scarce drag his bruised limbs after him to the ground where the army thus deserted were awaiting the result of Stephen Chamberlayne's search. On arriving he found himself assailed by innumerable questions, guesses, and solicitations, as to the reasons of the chief's extraordinary conduct: but, discreetly shunning any explanation which might

excite the clansmen's suspicions of whom they had been fighting against, the good monk confined himself to a general statement that there had been a private misunderstanding between Sir Alan and the Abbot, and that the assault upon Clan Gillmore, in consequence, would not be renewed. Soon after, Stephen Chamberlayne returned, without having procured either trace or tidings of the wretched man; and it was generally resolved to withdraw their forces to a safer position on the hill below, where, if not joined by their chieftain by the next morning, they should proceed homeward without further delay. Brother Virgil was charitably borne by his new associates to their temporary encampment, where, having his slight wound dressed, he got himself wrapped in a soldier's cloak; and, in spite of pain, anxiety, and danger, slept on the bare earth till sunrise.

Morning brought no tidings of the chief. The Abbot moved his force before daybreak; and the Clan Savage, after waiting in vain till near noon, proceeded, with heavy hearts, to follow in their track. By the assistance of Stephen Chamberlayne, the good Franciscan procured the body of the lady to be privately conveyed from the field; and he himself, not being able to mount his mule (for the quiet animal was found next morning grazing on the field of battle), was carried on a hand litter in the same procession. Comparatively little curiosity was excited as to who the lady might be, among men occupied with conjectures of so much more immediate interest to themselves. Stephen Chamberlayne, a discreet and faithful retainer, kept his own counsel, out of regard to the honour of his master's House; the Abbot cared not to revive the question of his share in the poor lady's misfortunes; and brother Virgil, simply stating it to be the body of a woman of the Clan Gillmore, whom he had converted to

Christianity during his imprisonment, satisfied any inquiry that was made by those about him. Stephen, too, was now a man of good account in the chieftain's household, and had sufficient influence to obtain the permission of his new captain to escort the monk to Carrickfergus with a separate band, while the main body of his people continued their journey across the Fords into their own country.

It may well be supposed that brother Virgil's reappearance was a source of much joy, and of infinite wonder among the fraternity. But the cenobites of St. Francis were in a condition ill-fitted for the reception of their recovered brother. A few of the cells, and one or two of the cloister arches had, it is true, been already cleared of their encumbering rubbish, but the main portion of the building was a ruin. The sight of his cherished home so desolated caused a considerable revulsion in the mind of the Franciscan: he found it difficult, when contemplating the works of Mac Gillmore's hands, to think of him with that perfect charity which had influenced him towards the outlaw, while these unfavourable memorials were still at a distance. Accordingly, while narrating to the astonished brotherhood his adventures of the last two days, brother Virgil rather suppressed than exaggerated his anxiety for the welfare of those who had given his community so little cause for good will towards them. The lady's rescue from paganism, and the baptism of the boy were hailed with pious approbation on all hands, and the corpse of the convert was interred with solemn ceremony in the vaults of the chapel, but neither the temper of those around him, nor his own feelings at the time, permitted brother Virgil, when recording the heathenish ignorance of the Muintir Gillmore at large, to broach those further schemes for their conversion which had engaged his

mind so strongly before he thus came to experience the effects of their barbarity on his own hearth. Still, it would be great injustice not to admit that, while the excellent man was open to every impulse of benevolence when acting by himself, his duty to his order obliged him in great measure to identify himself with the feelings of the brotherhood whilst among them. A certain consciousness of discipline restrained him too from the over free indulgence of his own bent; the atmosphere of the priory was uncongenial to adventure. He might have gone forth freely on any pilgrimage of peril from the mouth of the outlaw's cave; but it was a far different exploit to cross the threshold of his own monastery on a mission unauthorized by his prior.

Thus it was that the man, who, when thrown on his own resources, had shown himself equal to all the demands of most novel and arduous circumstances: and who, on his own honest impulse had acted in every emergency with the fearless and unhesitating zeal of a Christian champion, sank back without a struggle, on his return to monastic discipline, into his original quietude, and perhaps it might be called, timidity of character. His dreams of ambition gave place to a placid and meditative contentment: his daring zeal was succeeded by a tender, compassionate anxiety; denunciation now never burst from his lips; he had no longer need even for the severity of bold rebuke; day by day he settled down insensibly into his former character, until, when the priory of Saint Francis was in some measure restored, about the middle of the ensuing winter, the lately zealous and apostolic Virgil Mac Naughten could scarce have been distinguished from the quiet rider of the mule who hesitated to turn aside from his path at the cry of distress, six months before.

Meanwhile Clan Savage was ruled by another lord. Black Alan had been never heard of since the night of his mysterious disappearance. The general belief was that he had perished in endeavouring to cross the burning woods, a little to one side of the true breach by which his troops had entered. The kindred, unacquainted with the nature of his dispute with the Abbot, did not long remain at variance with their powerful neighbour, and, on more than one occasion since Alan's supposed death, they had aided the Church vassals of Bangor in scouring the woods about their common frontier. But the Muintir Gillmore for a time appeared to have abandoned their confines: that wandering race had fallen back upon the central deserts of Kilultagh, where they sojourned during the autumn undisturbed, although the report went that they were rapidly perishing of hardship and privation. Towards Christmas, it would appear that hunger had forced them out of their retreat, for accounts of depredations along the valley of the Lagan became more and more frequent as that inclement season approached. But the plunderers were few in number, and the outrages stealthy and unimportant compared with the former descents of the clan. Numerous expeditions were, however, undertaken to clear the woods of the returning nuisance, for the remnant of the once terrible Muintir Gillmore was now, alas, little more. The Abbot, whose brother's bawn had been broken into in one of these petty incursions, once more took the field, and at the head of some of his own people, aided by a party of the Clan Savage, drove the main body of the famished wretches, scarce thirty in number, back to their inhospitable retreat, while a few—among whom it was reported was Mac Gillmore himself, now quite recovered from his wounds—being separated from their friends, had been constrained to fly in an

opposite direction, and were now supposed to be lurking in the woods behind Carnmoney and Knockagh, whither a detachment of the hostile force was already gone in pursuit.

In this posture stood affairs on Christmas day. The morning devotions were over in the chapel of Saint Francis; and brother Virgil stood conversing with another friar beside the reconstructed altar. "Our repairs go on prosperously," observed his companion, looking up at the fresh timbered roof, and round the newly whitened walls: "if we had but a new oriel, one could scarce trace any vestige of the heathen."

"A glazed window is, indeed, our chief want now," said brother Virgil. "So large a space open to the weather makes the chapel miserably cold; but I hear that Sir John Bisset, of Glenarm, has promised to restore the whole window, in consideration of our prior's good will in the matter of his divorce. If he make it equal to the former one, it will be a magnificent and costly gift. Holy and blessed Francis! how desolate and bare we should have been left by our calamity, but for the piety of that noble family!"

"Ay, brother," replied his companion, "ours was a visitation and a judgment, indeed!—door and window, joist and rafter, pulpit and altar, all ruined and consumed! but, blessed be God! we are rising from our ashes, as our prior indeed aptly figured it after yesterday's refection, even as that Arabian bird called phoenix, which is averred to spring forth in renewed youth and beauty from its own funeral pyre. But, as to the munificent intention of Sir John Bisset, I would counsel the brotherhood to make their request to him that he would have the window constructed as at Armagh, with stancheons and mouldings of stone work; for thou mayest remember,

Virgil, that it was the iron of the old oriel which caused its destruction; and I would have nothing to tempt the cupidity of violent men in this new one."

"Thou art right, brother," replied Virgil: I have sometimes myself been half tempted to wish that such a metal as iron had never been known; but, when I see the useful works produced by men employing it in a peaceful and lawful manner, I forget my abhorrence of its other uses; and truly, if men had not steel wherewith to fulfil the evil desires of their hearts, they would fall on one another with weapons of some other kind—clubs or stones, or swords of brass, such as that wretched pagan Mac Gillmore, attempted my own life withal. Ah! had he been but satisfied with a brazen dagger it would have been well both for him and for his people! but he must needs turn the iron of church windows to his unholy uses, and see if the vengeance of God hath not pursued him from the day of that sacrilege down to the present hour!"

"True it is," said his companion, "crime such as his never failed to work its own punishment in the end—but hearken! I think I hear some tumult in the high street."

"It is only the noise of the town's people assembling for the evening service at the high cross;" replied brother Virgil—but, when he had listened for a moment, he altered his opinion. "Nay, there is surely something amiss, as thou sayest, brother," he cried; "let us go down and see what the matter is."

The monks had scarce crossed the threshold of their chapel, when they perceived two men and a boy running towards them at desperate speed, pursued by a tumultuous body of soldiery and townsmen. "Stop them, stop them, or the villains will take sanctuary!" was the cry, while stones, arrows and missiles of all sorts were showered after

and around them; but the fugitives, looking neither to the right nor left held straight for the gates of the priory, now lying open at scarce a bowshot ahead. The men were savage and gaunt-looking, their hair hanging matted over their brows, and their stark and bony limbs scarce covered by ragged garments. One ran halting, as if he had lately been lame, and by his side, and holding him by the hand, the boy apparently exhausted by his flight came half running, half pulled along. Alas, for the changes of fortune! It was Hugh Mac Gillmore, with Harry Oge and Owen Grumagh, coming to take shelter in the very sanctuary they had spoiled—the monk knew them at a glance, and it seemed as if the recognition was mutual, for a ray of hope lighted up the countenance of the outlaw the moment he saw him; and, lifting the boy in his arms, he ran for a while with fresh vigour; but his pursuers crowding after with shouts and imprecations, called to shut the priory gates and bar the fugitives out: “Now, God forbid that I should ever shut the gates of mercy!” exclaimed the compassionate Franciscan, throwing wide the chapel doors, and extending his arms to receive the foremost fugitive.

“Shut the door, monk, you know not what you do!” exclaimed a dozen voices! “it is the pagan Mac Gillmore! it is the heathen church robber!”

“Shut them out!—shut them out!” exclaimed the good monk’s companion when he heard the dreaded name; “they are coming to burn and plunder us again. Ho, brethren, fly! the pagan are at your doors! Fire, fire! St. Francis to the rescue!” and he strove to close the doors; but Virgil repelled him with a determined hand—the excitement of present emergency, which had before developed his peculiar character, again awakened all his slumbering energies—he was once more the fear-

less and independent advocate of charity, prepared to act on the impulse of his own benevolence, no matter what might be the consequence.

"Fie! brother, fie!" he cried in tones of vehement reproach, holding back the folding leaves of the door as the other, in haste and trepidation, sought to push them together;—"Fie, fie! wouldst thou refuse sanctuary to a repentant sinner?—Run, Mac Gillmore!—son of Rory, make haste!—this way, this way—holy and blessed Francis, they are overtaken! Ah, they are beset!—they are down!—no, no—they have burst through again—here, here!—ye sons of affliction, blessed be God, ye are safe at last!" he exclaimed, as the panting and exhausted fugitives dashed past him and staggered up the aisle. The pursuers followed furiously on to the threshold of the chapel, but they were chiefly townsmen, and dared not cross the sacred barrier. "Back, back! would ye violate God's holy sanctuary?" cried the monk, as the assailants pressed forward to the very verge of the privileged ground, with drawn weapons and frantic exclamations of rage and disappointment. The townsmen, awed by his rebuke, fell back; but the Savages, who were now crowding up the main street in pursuit, were not to be deterred by his most vehement denunciations. "He never spared either priest or sanctuary," they shouted, "and neither priest nor sanctuary shall save him now!—in, in! sons of the Seneschal—drag him down, though he be holding by the very rails of the altar! drag him down, we say, and we will cut his throat upon the steps!" On hearing this, brother Virgil, in serious alarm, closed the door. Its bars had hardly fallen into their places when a rush was made against it that shook both posts and staples. But the door was of thick oak plank, and firmly withstood the shock. "Ye are late, ye sacri-

legious dogs!" cried the monk, with a smile of sterner satisfaction than had ever crossed his countenance before, as he turned to assure the fugitives of their safety. Owen Grumagh had laid himself down at full length on the floor, panting like a dog after the chase, his reeking weapon still grasped in his hand. Mac Gillmore had advanced to the altar, and sat with one arm round his boy upon the steps. He had cast his sword away, and his right hand rested motionless upon the ground. He seemed even more spent than his prostrate retainer, reclining his back against the altar, and labouring convulsively at every breath he drew: the boy lay with his head on his father's bosom, sobbing and trembling. "Thou art safe, Mac Gillmore," said the good Virgil; "even here thou art not beyond God's mercy; though thou of all men hast the least right to claim sanctuary at that altar."

Mac Gillmore attempted no reply: he was too much exhausted to speak; but he raised his hand and pointed to the altar overhead. A bundle wrapped in rags lay on it: brother Virgil untied the knots, and perceived with joyful surprise that it contained the restored spoils of the priory: the salvers and chalices and the relics of Saint Francis, in their little oaken box, were all there, safe and sound. "Mac Gillmore," exclaimed the delighted monk, "this is an offering which will stand thy soul in good stead yet, if thou hast but brought a contrite heart to lay along with it upon God's altar."

"I have brought a better offering," gasped the outlaw; "here, friar," giving the almost unconscious boy into the good man's arms, "take him; he is innocent and undefiled—it was his mother's wish—let him be one of your order—and, Harry *dhas*, when you are a priest, oh, pray for your people and for your wicked father!"

Owen Grumagh raised his head reproachfully from the flags: "You would not make a gilly of the Tierna Oge, Mac Gillmore?" he said in hoarse and broken accents.

"I would have my son to be a servant of God, Owen," replied the outlaw.

"His grandfather never owned a master," muttered the savage in faint accents, as his head sank again upon the stones.

Meanwhile, the tumult without was increasing. The Clan Savage, rendered more furious by resistance, surrounded the chapel, trying at door and window for an entrance; but the door stood unshaken, and the narrow slits which lighted the side aisles, would not admit a man's body. Brother Virgil stood to listen: he heard them consulting in the porch: what they said he could not distinctly understand in the confusion of so many voices; but one word fell upon his ear with terrible import. "My God!—the open oriel!" he exclaimed; "they are calling for ladders that they may enter through the open window."

The outlaw groaned.

"Ay, well mayest thou groan," cried the monk; "if thou hadst not turned the bars of that window to weapons of destruction, thy blood would not redden the weapons of thy enemies this day. Oh, God, surely this is Thy judgment: surely Thy hand hath been manifest throughout!"

The outlaw cast one glance at the open window overhead: the top of a ladder was seen at the same moment rising above the sill: he made no effort to escape. "Oh save my child!" he exclaimed, and stretched his hands in supplication to the monk. The Franciscan bore the reluctant boy to a side door; the outlaw followed them with his eyes till they were out of sight; then sank back

with a sigh of relief, and resigned himself quietly to his fate. But Owen Grumagh seeing their assailants thronging through the window, scrambled once more to his feet, and tottered forward to resist their ingress; but before he could reach the altar his strength failed him, and he fell, never to rise again: the Savages leaped down unresisted, and, when brother Virgil, having left the boy in a place of security, returned, accompanied by other monks to protest against the violation of the sanctuary, he found the doors thrown open, and the aisle crowded with men-at-arms waiting only for one more hardy than the rest to drag their victim from his seat upon the altar steps, before they should indulge their thirst for blood. Mac Gillmore regarded his executioners with a glassy eye; he was fast escaping from their vengeance, and neither moved nor spoke. "Drag him down!—of what are ye afraid?" shouted those near the door.

"Send an arrow through him!" exclaimed others, standing closer to their victim, yet hesitating themselves to use the sword.

No man was found willing to lay hands upon him in that place; and the monks interposing, crucifix in hand, imprecating dreadful punishments upon all who should persevere in the sacrilege, thrust them half-way back to the door. At the same moment a horseman galloping at his utmost speed leaped from the saddle, exclaiming, "Shame, shame! ye are no better than the pagan ye pursue!"—pushing some aside as he entered the church, and beating others back with the flat of his sword. It was Stephen Chamberlayne, now captain of the Clan Savage galloglass, and his authority was exercised with full effect. The reluctant soldiery gradually withdrew from the chapel, but crowded round the door, still burning for revenge, and crying that they only

waited till their enemy should be given forth by the proper authority.

"Let us take him forth, then," said one of the brethren, who had only contended for the inviolability of his altar; "give him into their hands, and let them do execution on him at the High Cross: he is a felon whom the Church cannot pardon."

"Nay," exclaimed brother Virgil; "thou knowest not what he hath done to atone to us for his crimes: wait till the tumult is appeased, and let us hear what can be said in mitigation of his punishment."

"Give him a fair trial," said Stephen Chamberlayne; "God knows he has had strong provocation at all our hands."

"Let us not act with unseemly precipitation," said another of the brethren; "whatever we determine must not appear to be done through terror of this ungodly and base rout at our doors." This last opinion seemed to bear the greatest weight, and the brethren were about to close the doors and proceed to further consultation, when a fresh tumult among the crowd attracted their attention. The multitude made way with cries of astonishment and eager expectation as a man approached with gestures of impatience. "Way, way!" they shouted, while a voice of terrible intonation made itself audible above their clamour, and cried in tones of thunder—"WAY FOR ME!" The crowd opened and fell back, as if before a spectre, as Black Alan Savage, with flashing eyes and the speed of a maniac, strode into the chapel.

"I have sworn by Sun and Wind!" he exclaimed, pressing forward to the altar. Mac Gillmore raised his head, and regarded him with a glance of amazement mingled with defiance. He half rose to his feet, and grasped his weapon, but the dagger of Black Alan was

twice plunged in his breast before he could make any effort at self-defence, and he sank back and expired upon the altar, a victim, in the eyes of the bystanders, to the retributive justice of Heaven.

The moment the deed was accomplished Black Alan turned and fled. None cared to stop him, for he still held the bloody weapon in his hand, and threatened death to any who might oppose him. He took his course towards the mountain of Slieve-a-true, and, so great was his speed, that neither horse nor man could at that time trace him farther. It was said that he was often seen afterwards about the rocks and caverns of Ben Madigan, nay, that the upper cave in which he had been imprisoned by Mac Gillmore was his usual habitation; but his strength and ferocity had made him an object of terror, and no one ventured to dog his footsteps for any length of time. Some also who were present that day in Carrickfergus declared that the weapon with which he had perpetrated the deed was one of the rude pike heads found in the lower cave which Mac Gillmore's people had used as their smithy; and, as these were known to have been made from the bars of the fatal oriel, the report excited many a shudder among those who heard the history of the original sacrilege. It needed but one other deed of blood to fill up the measure of calamity which had been dealt out to that ill-fated district: the Abbot of Bangor was found murdered in his own cloisters, about a month after the death of Mac Gillmore; whether by one of the survivors of the out-lawed clan, or by Black Alan, is uncertain; but the general belief was, that he had perished by the hands of the latter.

Brother Virgil had now but to fulfil the injunctions of the dying chieftain. Harry Oge was taken under his protection and tutelage: the boy, with a natural fondness

for gentle pursuits, soon became the darling of the fraternity: his piety and benevolence made him equally beloved by the people; and when he had been some time in orders, he was enabled to procure a plenary pardon for such of his wandering kindred as still remained without the pale of the Church. The remnant of the Muintir Gillmore came in with ready submission and acquiescence in whatever was required by their missionary chieftain, and brother Virgil had the satisfaction at last of assisting at the baptism of as many of his old catechumens as had survived the events we have recorded.

“I think I may stop here,” said Turlogh; “only adding that the name of Stephen Chamberlayne appears as Seneschal of Ards in a patent roll of the next reign, and that Harry Oge, having assumed the name of Junius, lived to be Prior of his order.”

SEVENTH NIGHT.

[“AND now, Turlogh,” said Henry O'Neill, “since it is my turn to select a tale, my request is that you tell us something of our immediate family; some characteristic adventure—for example—of our father Shane.”

“That would not be difficult to me,” replied Turlogh, “for Shane *an Diomas* had many stirring adventures, although some of them did not altogether redound to his credit. He was a brave and gallant man; splendid, in dress, in person, in ability, in energy—a leader of men, a ruler who was obeyed both from fear and from love. Though he could sway others, and compel obedience to Tribal Law, he could not, or would not, control his own passions. He was the slave of his impulses, and did not hesitate to carry them into effect by violence, and still oftener by dissimulation. It might not be pleasing to your noblenesses to hear of some of his actions. But if I am to tell of him, I must speak the truth.”

“And it might be well that we should know, and realize the truth,” interposed Hugh Roe O'Donnell. “If my cousins and I are destined to escape from our captivity, and to assume hereafter the headship of our people, would it not be well that we should understand and ponder those facts in the history of our respective families which have hitherto prevented a cordial alliance for the cause of Country and of Faith? I know,” he continued, addressing Art and Henry O'Neill, “that your father, Shane, hated and injured my kinsman Calvagh, and carried off his wife, and lived with her in open sin. Now if we all clearly recognised how evil brings with it its own punish-

ment, and also the suffering which the vices of its princes bring on the country whose interests ought to be so dear to all Irishmen, and in especial to ourselves—for are we not the responsible rulers of Ulster?—do you not think we could more readily free ourselves from those heart-burnings and enmities which have hitherto kept us divided? Are we not, O'Neills and O'Donnells alike, bound to strive for Land and Church, and to bear in mind our common descent from Niall the Great? Let us forget our jealousies in the past, and combine to free our country, if it be possible, from those who would dispossess both alike of Tyrone, and of Tyrconnell. The power of the English to do this, depends largely on their success in keeping us apart. Do not fear to tell us, Turlogh, the plain unvarnished facts of history. My cousins must not shrink from learning the truth as regards their father. Nor must I wince when I am reminded of the wickedness of Calvagh O'Donnell's wife."

The Bard, thus urged, commenced his narrative without further pressure.]

AN ADVENTURE OF SHANE O'NEILL'S.

ON an evening early in the summer of 1567, when all Ulster was convulsed with the rebellion of Shane O'Neill, a curragh, or rude boat of native construction put off from that part of the shore of Lough Neagh which still is, as it then was, overhung by the deep woods of Edenduff-carrick. The wind was from the land; and, gathering way as they opened the little creek of Antrim, the voyagers shot southward on the rising breeze, and leaving the level meadows of Killead upon their quarter, bore down for the wooded and round-towered recess of Ram's Island. The crew were native Irish, and it was evident that violence had accompanied their presence in Antrim. One prisoner, a man bound hand and foot, lay motionless in the bottom of the boat; another, a female, and, by her dress, an Englishwoman, sat sobbing and trembling under her close-drawn mantle at the foot of the mast. The leader of their captors was a man still far from the prime of life, and of a noble but licentious aspect. His dress was Irish, and might be called splendid, but was torn and soiled, like that of one who had forced his way through a wild country. His band were tall and picked men, bearded and savage, and, like their captain, covered with the tokens of a rough and hasty journey. The chief had at first taken his seat by the side of the captive female, making ineffectual efforts to soothe her terror; but now, unwilling, as it would seem, to expose himself longer in the character of an unsuccessful suitor before his men, he rose with an air of disappointment, and, taking the helm, busied himself in the navigation of the little vessel. The breeze was still freshening and coming round to the east, and the ill-built boat made little way, as the Irishmen,

after rounding the head-land which forms one side of the Crumlin's embouchure, endeavoured to beat up to the island, now lying close to windward. "Strike your sail," cried the chief in Irish, "and take your oars." The flapping squaresail was lowered, and the crew laying hold of their oars, gave way so stoutly, that in a short time they were within a stone's throw of the beach, but pulling with inconsiderate violence, they ran the boat a-ground upon a covered bank. At the concussion the female prisoner looked up for the first time. She was a beautiful girl, although her face was pale from suffering and terror, and her eyes swollen and red from weeping. As she looked up, and beheld the scene before her—the lonely uninhabited island, with its thick woods and massive tower in the midst, within the walls of which any villany might be securely perpetrated—the savage figures by her side, and the looks of unconcealed exultation with which the chief regarded the shore—she uttered a faint scream, and sunk her head again upon her bosom; then drew her mantle across her face, and sat silent, while the crew endeavoured to push off the stranded curragh with their oars. Their efforts were unavailing; the boat was fast. First one and then another leaped overboard, and laid his shoulder to the gunwale: it was in vain: the bottom was soft and tenacious, and the curragh stuck on the crown of the bank, unmoved. The chief himself now rose, cast off his mantle and cap, and, regardless of the richness of his dress, plunged also into the water, and joined his strength to the exertions of his men, who now stood up to their middles, one and all struggling and heaving round the shaken curragh. Their united efforts at length cleared the forward half of the keel, but the boat still hung fast by the stern. "It is the weight of the Scot," cried one; "he lies under the thwarts like a log." "'Tis so!" cried

the chief, "I had forgotten the knave: cut his cords, and let him jump overboard with the rest, and help: it will go hard with him to escape us here." The kern drew his knife, and, leaning over the gunwale, obeyed his leader's orders.

The Scot started to his feet, a tall and sinewy islander, for he wore the Clan Donnell plaid, although his other dress was foreign. He stood for a moment casting his eyes about, as if meditating a spring upon the nearest of his captors; but the Irish laid their hands on their knives, and he apparently abandoned the desperate design. At that instant the chief signed to him to remain where he was, for the boat began to yield to the impulse of those already round her. The curragh was now nearly altogether free; but as she floated forward, the increasing breeze catching in the loose corners of her sail, and acting on her high projecting prow, forced her head round, till, as the crew gave their last push, she lay almost parallel with the shore. The Scot fixed his eye on the lough to windward, where frequent flaws were raising a darker curl upon the swell already running between them and the land, and dashing the sides and shoulders of the dripping Irish. At the moment of their final effort a sudden squall threw up the white spray from the very verge of the Linnemore, and came down blackening the lough, and bending all the tree tops of the island. The Scot leaped up on the seat beside the motionless female—he laid hold of the loose halliards—and before the surprised crew perceived what he intended, the sail was up, and the boat, drawing off with a sudden roll, was on her course like a slipped greyhound. The Irish were overturned and confounded; two only retained their hold of the curragh. One was their leader; he hung on by the stern, confused at first, and stunned

by the water hissing round and over his head; his hair streamed out through the eddy of his shoulders, and his limbs floated in foam behind. The other clung to the quarter, where being less exposed to the rush of the water, he raised himself by his hands, and was about to plant his knee upon the gunwale, when he dropped with relaxed limbs, and swept astern, face downwards, and to all appearance lifeless. The Scot had made fast the halliards, and with an oar in his hands stood prepared to strike down in the same manner the next who might attempt to board him. When he at the stern saw his man float past him, blood flowing from his head, and his arms swaying about in the water, he let go his hold, and swam for the disappearing body. The wounded man was settling down, and already many feet from the surface, when his chief plunged at the ill-defined and wavering object. A half minute might have elapsed when he reappeared, dragging him by the hair, and mingling shouts for help with denunciations of revenge.

"Swim, villains, swim," he cried, looking towards the island, where he could distinguish a dark head here and there rising and falling among the waves as his men made to his assistance.

"The plunder of the Castle of Toome to the first man who gives me his hand!—it is Harry Oge, my foster-brother—the bravest one of my galloglass—his head is cleft in two—strike out, villainus, strike out, as ye would not hang on the highest gibbet of Foich-na-gall!" Then raising his clenched hand, and shaking it at the Scot, now almost out of hearing, he shouted along the wake of the curragh, "Dog, and son of a wolf-dog, thou shalt feast the kites for this! Hound of a Scot, starved islander! thy cousin Sorley Buy shall answer for

thy head, or I will burn Dunluce from hearth to flag-staff."

By this time his men were by his side. Harry Oge, still senseless, was placed between two of the strongest swimmers; and their chief, exhausted by his passion and exertions, laid a hand upon the shoulder of another, and they all struck out together for the shore. Meanwhile on board the curragh, the triumphant Scot and his companion stood clinging to the rude rigging, and gazing on one another; she still terrified, not yet comprehending her escape; he panting and flushed, and alternating congratulation with assurances of protection and safe-conduct.

"Thou art free again, lady," he cried, in good English, "thanks to the Virgin and Saint Columbkille! Nay, fear not"—for she shrunk from his extended hand, involuntarily drawing her mantle closer round her, but turning her eyes full of appealing supplication on his face—"fear nothing, lady, unworthy of thy condition and mine. I am a Scottish gentleman, and will with my life protect thee from all discourtesy."

Blushing deeply, she drew back her mantle, and offered her hand; the Scot raised it to his lips, for, as her face betokened a gentle spirit, so did her white and jewelled fingers evince a gentle birth and condition.

"Forgive me, noble sir," she said, "that I only now thank thee for my deliverance. I have been in doubt of life and honour since before sunrise, and am a helpless girl, far from my native country and my father's house."

Her tears flowed abundantly as she spoke, and the Scot was touched to the heart by her distress; he aided her from her uneasy place beside the mast, to a more comfortable seat in the stern, and spread the mantles of the Irish under her feet, telling her, with all the kindli-

ness of sincerity, that she should be protected and cared for like a sister, till he might restore her to her home, or leave her in some place of honourable safety. They swept on before the wind till all danger of pursuit was past; and the Scot, intrusting the helm to his fair companion, began to contract his sail by such rude contrivances as came to hand; for the eastern sky was momentarily putting on a gloomier aspect, and the wind was still increasing. His glances at the darkening horizon were so anxious, that his companion also turned her head, and looked in alarm in the same direction.

"Noble sir," said she, "dost thou see any one in pursuit? I see but our own sail on the lake, and one far distant towards the north; our enemies seem to stand idly on the point of the island."

"We are not pursued, dear lady," replied the Scot. "but tell me, wert thou ever on this lake before?"

"Alas! no," she said, "but it has been shown to me from the top of the mountain behind a kinsman's dwelling in the Claneboy."

"Canst thou tell me then," he eagerly inquired, "in which direction the great river Bann lieth?" She mused a moment in silence. "For," continued he in explanation, "I was never before beyond the sea-coast of this country, and can only guess our situation by some vague recollections of what I have heard in my youth."

"The Bann," at length she said, "runs to the sea from this extremity of the lake," pointing northward across the waters, now glittering in the hazy light of sunset; "for that mountain on the right before us is Slieve Gallen; and I remember the mist of the river's course lay between that mountain and us, when we stood on a high hill beyond these woods which we are now leaving."

"Then," said the Scot, "let us sail down the Bann, for

one of my kinsmen has a castle, called Dunluce, not far from the mouth of the river on the sea-shore; and were we there, I could easily protect thee whither thou wouldst."

"Alas," she replied, "we must not venture on the Bann, for I have heard my father say that the fierce rebel, Hugh MacMurrough, is in arms on both banks next the lake, and that between him and the sea are the O'Kanes and MacQuillens, both cruel tribes, and hostile to the English."

"If the MacQuillens stand in our way," said the Scot, "I have little chance of passage; it is almost the only tidings I have heard of my kinsmen here of late, that they and the MacQuillens are at mortal feud."

"Their castle of Innislochlín stands in the very middle of the river," said she.

"Then," replied he, "we must not attempt the Bann. Yet be not cast down. Could we reach Armagh, we were safe; the Archbishop is my mother's cousin, and, though a heretic, would shelter us for her sake. Knowest thou where Armagh lies, lady?"

"Far to the south," she replied, "and many miles from the shore of the lake; but, my friend, why not return to the coast from which we have been forced away, and endeavour to find a passage to Carrickfergus through the woods?"

"Would that we could!" said he; "but under such a sky, and in such a vessel, we dare not face this wind from the east. I would I knew somewhat more of this country; but I have been in France since my boyhood, and now when returning, after many years, to seek my kinsmen and friends, I have scarce put foot on shore, when these banditti, from whom we are but now escaped, seize and convey me hither, as thou, lady, hast partly seen;

for I was a whole day in their fetters before they laid their accursed hands on thee."

By this time the wind had increased so much that he had again to commit the helm to the keeping of his fair pilot, while he confined the struggling canvas to still smaller bounds; for as the limber curragh yielded to the force with which she was driven through the water, it seemed as if her sides would have been crushed together. A premature twilight was coming up on the wind; for while the sun was still red above the Tyrone hills, the east was dark, as if he had been an hour under the Atlantic. The swells of the lough grew gradually heavier, and although the curragh lay before the blast, her prow was frequently covered with a burst of spray, that rebounded from her sail, and swept past, sparkling with bright colours in the level sunbeams, and contrasting fearfully with the brown tumbling waters below. The Scot looked at his companion; she glanced with a despairing eye, from the rising storm behind, to the waste of muddied waves before them, and shuddered as she saw the red rim of the sun already dipping behind the hazy line of hills they were approaching.

"Be of good cheer, lady," he said, "I have sailed rougher seas than this at midnight; and we shall be at the foot of yonder hills in another hour, if the good boat hold on as now. But wrap thyself up, and let me spread a couch for thee here, out of reach of the wind and the cold spray."

He re-arranged the cloaks in the bottom of the boat, rolling one for a pillow; and the terrified girl, glad to hide her eyes from the sight of their dangers, lay down with grateful confidence at his feet. In another half hour it was dark as midnight, and blowing a full gale. The curragh bent and quivered under the patch of canvas

that was still spread to steady her in her course; and the spray from the seas a-head flew over her in a ceaseless shower. The Scot sat, firmly grasping the tiller in one hand, while with the other he was ever intent on some kind office to his companion—doubling the loose skirts of her coverings over her, arranging her coarse pillow, or, when the boat's mad plunges threatened to pitch both forward to the mast, taking her unresisting hand and steadying her on her sloped and perilous bed. Another long period of suffering was past, and the black outline of the Tyrone hills was fast rising on the leaden-coloured sky. The Scot leaned forward, straining his eyes through the spray and gloom, and eagerly bending his ears to listen, for he thought he had already twice distinguished the dash of breakers over the tumult that surrounded him. He caught it again; the sound was close under the lee. He ventured for the first time to put down his helm. The curragh came round, and with wind upon her beam, and sweeping down the trough of the sea, held southward along shore. The Scot now hung over the gunwale, watching with intense anxiety for some opening in the surf's line of dull light, already plainly distinguishable, and almost within arrow range upon his lee, for his eyes had caught a break in the long chain of hills, and he judged rightly that some river fell into the lake through the valley thus marked. Every wave now swept him nearer and nearer the broken water, where to attempt a landing seemed certain death; for the roar of the breakers was like the voice of the open sea upon its rocks, and the frail basket-work of the curragh would have been crushed flat, the moment she took the ground. At length when hope was almost gone, the breakers receded; and the long swell, on which he had been swinging forward to destruction, grew short and turbulent. It was the

mouth of the river. The Scot let his boat's head fall away from its unequal contest, and the curragh swept in between two lines of raging surf, and through the tumult of a torrent contending with the roll of an inland sea. Every instant he expected to be impaled on the jag of a rock, or beaten flat upon a sand-bank; but the river was deep in flood, and they swept on. Half full of water, quivering and straining, the boat breasted the stream, impelled by the force of a storm that scattered boughs of the stripped forest over the very waves she mounted. Wooded hills rose high on either hand, their waving outline of tossed tree-tops breaking the dim sky as far as the eye could reach; but the black mass suddenly seemed to open, for the curragh had come abreast of a tributary stream, and in the next instant was gliding into smooth water under the shelter of its bank. The Scot drew his breath freely again, as he felt the bottom of his boat grate gently on the gravelly slope between him and the shore, now within a leap of where he stood.

"Lady, dear lady!" he exclaimed, taking the cold hands of his companion in his, "we are safe once more—arise now, that I may bear thee to the land."

A low moan was all the reply.

"Thy sufferings are now over, my poor friend," said he, stooping and raising her half lifeless form in his arms; "I see a light on shore, and thou shalt soon be dry and warm again." He placed her on the seat he had himself occupied, then stepped into the shallow water alongside, and, lifting her like a child in his arms, bore her, step by step, fathoming as he went, to land. He laid her, murmuring inarticulate thanks, among the long grass and rushes of the holm; then wrung the water from his dripping cap and hair, and climbed the bank to look around for the fire, the reflection of which on the sky he had

already distinguished from the river. On an open space, immediately below, he now saw it dull and scattered, and showing itself in several distinct piles. It was the ruin of a burned house, through the windows of which the embers of the thatch were casting their dull glow to the unstayed blast of the storm. Charred rafters still hung from the standing walls, their ends lost in a heap of smoking rubbish, half extinguished by its own weight,*and by the heavy fall of scattered masses of masonry. The sight, dreadful under any other circumstances—for the scene around was stern and desolate, and the violence of the times made it more than probable that still worse horrors lay hidden under the heaped ashes—was grateful to the chilled and almost exhausted Scot. He raked a pile of red charcoal together under the shelter of the outer wall, and cast the pieces of a broken rafter on the embers, then cleared a spot beside his lonely bonfire, and for a minute stood expanding his numbed hands over the cheerful glow. His heart smote him with a painful pang of self-reproach, for he had for that minute forgotten the poor sufferer on the grass beside the river. He started from his momentary indulgence, and, by the light of the blazing fagots, threaded his way back with a fluttering heart; for when once conscious of having admitted one moment's neglect of his companion, he found his fancy teeming with a thousand images of disaster; and it was not till he had raised her in his arms, and seen her eyes re-open in the light which he was again approaching, that he began to feel assured of her safety and of his own exculpation. Her eyes opened with glances of gratitude, and her lips murmured its more articulate expression. The Scot thrilled with a delight long unknown to his bosom, as he placed his burden, pale and drooping as she was, in the warmth of the fire he had prepared for her. He knelt

beside her ; he chafed her hands in his ; he piled log upon log till the flame blazed to the height of a man's head before them ; then hung up a dripping cloak to dry, and when the strong frieze glowed, would wrap it round her feet, or dry her long hair in the folds of his own plaid. By degrees she raised her relaxed frame and sat up, the colour coming and going on her cheek in alternations of pleasure and shame ; for the first use of her returning faculties was to reflect that a strange man had borne her in his arms, had pressed her to his breast, had fondled her hands, and was now kneeling by her side, and gazing into her eyes with the passionate ardour of a lover. The Scot perceived her confusion ; he sank his abashed eye, and half withdrew his hand from the support of her side.

"Dear friend," he said, "be not pained, I pray thee : hadst thou been the Queen of Scots, I could not have less profaned thy dignity."

"Forgive me again, noble sir," she said, offering her hand, "thou art my preserver and protector. I would not pain thee by any show of unworthy distrust—I have entire confidence in thine honour—but I no longer need thy support, my kind friend : weary thyself no more in the service of one already thy debtor beyond aught she can express."

When the Scot perceived her so far recovered that she sat without support, and began to enjoy the comfortable warmth of the fire, he left her side, and again made his way to the boat, whence he returned in a few minutes, bearing a basket well stored with provisions, the preparations of the Irish for their intended banquet on Ram's Island. He also brought with him the cloak and cap of their leader, with which, at the earnest instance of his companion, he replaced his own.

"Ha, ha !" he now exclaimed, as he drew out napkin

after napkin enveloping their unexpected good cheer, "these knaves had promised themselves a dainty supper; white bread, venison, and, if I mistake not, wild-duck—and here, by my faith, and as I am a true Catholic, wine of Bourdeaux! Drink, lady; this will soon revive thee." He filled a wooden cup hooped with silver and presented it to the young Englishwoman; then cnarged a more capacious horn for himself, and drained it to her health and fortunes at a stoop—"Bon Dieu!" he cried, "these rogues have choice taste in their liquor—and now, lady, let us do reason to their cookery." He spread a napkin between them, and placed the choicest of the viands before her, piled up the fire anew, and then stretched himself upon the glistening sward in jovial mood to his repast.

His companion, refreshed, and assured of her safety, now threw back the hood of her mantle, and partially bared her neck to the genial warmth, while her colour returned, and her eyes sparkled with eager interest as she looked on the romantic scene around. They sat upon a sheltered spot between the black wall and the great fire; dark trees waving overhead, and trunk behind trunk glancing in the light, as far back as the eye could penetrate the forest. The wind sweeping past the ruined gable, fell full on the crackling brands, while it left them securely sheltered where they reclined, basking on the short sward, and casting involuntary looks of delight on one another.

"Dear friend," said the Scot, gazing with unconcealed admiration at the bright vision before him, "tell me by what evil chance thou hadst fallen into the hands of yonder banditti—an evil chance for thee, tender and unused to hardship as thou art, but a rare favour of fortune to me; for now, methinks. I would hardly exchange this grassy couch, with its canopy of driving clouds, and

leafy walls of forest, for the richest banqueting-hall of Saint Germain's."

She blushed at his ardent declaration; but when in answer to his question, her thoughts reverted to her forlorn condition, tears came again to her eyes, and she sighed deeply as she replied, "My name is Clara Warden; I am the daughter of an English knight serving here in the Queen's army. My unhappy story is soon told: I was in the house of a kinsman in Claneboy, when they from whom thou hast delivered me, came craving certain Irish exactions of Coyne and Livery: they got what they demanded, and went on their way, but the lawless eye of their leader had fallen on me. They surrounded my kinsman's house this morning ere daybreak, and I was violently forced away."

"And thy father, lady?"

"Thanks to Heaven, my father was with the army now gone against the arch-rebel O'Neill."

"What?" said the Scot, "is O'Neill again in rebellion?"

"He hath been so ever since I first heard his name," she replied, "and now of late has grown to such head and authority among the native tribes of the north, that all the forces of the Queen are hitherto unable to control him."

"What!" again exclaimed the Scot, "has the lame Earl such a spirit still?"

"Alas," said she, "thou hast not heard of our late troubles. Con O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, is dead, and his son Shane *an Diomas*, which means in our language, John the Proud, a cruel tyrant, who rebelled against his father, and it is reported has slain his brother, has now levied open war against his sovereign. He is the oppressor and scourge alike of English and Irish in the north."

"Where is his country, lady?" asked the Scot.

"If we have crossed the lake, we are even now in it," she replied, in a low voice; "all Tyrone is his, and if we have come hither before the east wind, we are now in Tyrone."

The Scot started, and looked around as if he expected an enemy to appear behind every tree; but the forest stood desolate and undisturbed by other footsteps than the trampling of the storm, which still raved down the leafy wilderness with undiminished fury. "Where lies the traitor's camp, lady?" questioned he again, withdrawing his assured glances from the skirts of the forest, and once more fixing them on the beautiful face of his companion.

"I know not its situation," she answered; "but it is named Foich-na-gall, and lies somewhere in the woods."

"Ha!" replied the other, "he is then that bold rebel whose fame had reached me even in Paris—he who called his camp The Stranger's Hatred, and hangs up his soldiers for eating English bread."

"Nay," replied Clara, "it is even said that an English gentleman of good birth was lately slain by one of his kern for maintaining that he was not less honourable than the tyrant's swine."

"And," rejoined the Scot, "I have heard from grave men at our court, that he is wont to quench the fever of his blood after overdeep draughts of aqua vitæ, by plunging himself to the chin in one of the peat bogs of this marshy and ill-conditioned country."

"He is in sooth a debauched and wicked tyrant," replied Clara. "It is but a year since he robbed a western chief, Calvagh O'Donnell, of his liberty and lordship, and now lives, it is reported, with the wife of his prisoner, and she too a near kinswoman of his own lady. Nay, his present lawful wife herself is the daughter of one whom he slew in battle with his own hand."

"How is that," cried the Scot, "methinks the women of this rude country are as unnatural as the men!"

"She was a Scottish lady," said Clara. Her companion started and reddened as she spoke. "Her mother also gave her hand to one of the native Irish, a cousin of O'Neill, and a bitter enemy of her murdered husband."

"This is amazing and unexampled," said the Scot; "of what house were they, lady?"

Clara coloured and cast down her eyes in evident distress—"Alas, sir," she replied, "I had forgotten that thou art thyself of Scotland, else had I not distressed thee with the mention of these events."

"Tell me, I beseech thee," cried he, "I have been long from home, and know not but that they may be of my own blood, till thou repliest to my question."

"Art thou of the clan Campbell?" said she in a low voice.

"No, no!" exclaimed he; "but I have an aunt, the daughter of Argyle—I am myself of the M'Donnell clan—Randall of Mull."

She raised her eyes and fixed them mournfully and imploringly on his countenance—"Pity me," she said, "that I must be the bearer of such tidings to my benefactor; one daughter of Argyle is that lady of O'Donnell, her sister's husband, James of Kintyre, is dead."

The Scot dropped the horn from his hands. "My uncle dead!" he cried; "and my aunt—my aunt, and my cousin Catharine—what of them? Speak, speak, I beseech you!"

"Woe is me," said the poor girl; "they are the other unhappy ladies of whom I have already spoken." Her eyes filled with tears at the sight of the pain she had inflicted, for the Scot fell to the ground, covering his face and groaning in the anguish of despair.

Clara Warden sat for a moment confounded and dis-

tressed by the violence of his grief. She clasped her hands, and looked up beseechingly to Heaven; and although the eye could catch nothing between the earth and sky, save the driving curtain of clouds, and the agitated tops of trees, she found the aid she sought, and rose with tender and affectionate care to render charitable offices to him, who so short a time before had comforted her in her misery. She knelt down by the prostrate man; and he heard soft accents mingled with tears and tremulous entreaties by his side. He knew that his companion was there sympathizing with his sorrow, distressed for having caused it, and meekly endeavouring to soothe him; but it was long ere he could bring himself to bare his face, wet, although with not unmanly tears, and flushed with the shame of his honour to the eyes even of such a comforter. At length his hand pressed the gentle palm on which it rested, and he turned, unable to withstand the appeal of the piteous eyes that met his own. He sat down again, burying his face in his hands, and giving free expression to the bitterness of his sorrow. "Dear friend," at length he said, composing his agitated features, and taking the hand of the fair being who knelt, absorbed in wonder, self-reproach, and pity, by his side, "I have yielded to that in thy presence which never abased my manhood before; but such sorrow as mine to-night, it has never before been my lot to encounter. Thou dost feel for me and pity me, and thy tears are balm to my grief; but weep not, I pray thee, that thou hast been the messenger of ill tidings to me. I have lost kinsman and kinswoman; ignominiously lost her whom I once loved best in the world—but even when thus desolate, I have found a comforter, a consoler—perhaps a truer friend."

Clara was painfully conscious that her situation would not permit her to listen to the avowal which she felt

approaching. In another place, under other circumstances—beneath the roof of friends, and near the natural guardians of her youth, she might have awaited in fluttering expectance the declaration of such a lover; but there alone and in the depths of the forest, she shrunk from the dangerous topic.

“Noble sir,” she asked willing to change the subject “what dost thou judge best to be done?”

The Scot roused himself from the influences of his mingled emotions, and, standing up at her question, with a heavy sigh replied:

“We must trim our fire, lady, and rest by it till day break. I will frame thee a tent of these mantles, which shall be respected with as much loyalty as if it were the **lodging of my own Queen.** I shall bring hither our oar and sail from the boat, and employ them also in building the rude booth thou must inhabit to-night; to-morrow will, I trust, see thee in a fitter dwelling. Rest here, then till I return; I shall not be long away.”

He gave her an assuring but melancholy smile, and departed to execute his purpose. Clara gazed after him till the thick underwood closed between them, and then sunk her head and wept, she knew not **whether for her own helplessness or for his sorrow.**

At this moment, a party of Irish were descending a rude defile in the woods, within arrow range of the lovely and disconsolate English girl. They were the escort of a lady who rode in the midst muffled and silent. The reflection of the fire had attracted them from a distance, and, as they advanced towards the light, a nimble scout had been despatched to reconnoitre. He accomplished his mission, and returned to report what he had observed to those who had sent him, and arrested their steps before **they had approached within sight of the ruined house.**

"Who are they?" questioned the lady in Irish.

"A man and an Englishwoman, Bantierna," he replied, "and by your head," he added, in a low voice, "I know the purple cloak of the Duine-Waisil."

The lady started, and bent her ear to the whisper in which her spy communicated the remainder of his intelligence.

"Put out your lights," she said, in a suppressed voice, to her attendants; "and do thou, Alister Mackenzie, come and see if this be true."

A man wrapped in a dark mantle dismounted, and came forward.

"For the love of the Virgin, Alister," said the lady in an impatient and tremulous voice, "go forward with Munagh Garbh, and tell me truly whether thou thinkest him in the right. I cannot trust myself to look at them."

She was weeping passionately ere she had said so much, and remained in tears till Mackenzie returned.

"It is too true, Bantierna," he said; "I stole down within a step or two of where she sat,—they had been at supper,—he was gone; but I knew Harry Oge's cloak—and she sat upon it."

"Alister, Alister, I shall go mad!" cried the lady. "What! supping and carousing in the open woods with the daughter of the stranger, while I have been seeking him from Bann to Blackwater. I will meet O'Neill and upbraid him to his face!"

"Bantierna, he is gone," said Mackenzie; "and we cannot guess whither."

"Then," exclaimed she, gathering up her bridle, "I will go down and put out his paramour's eyes—with my own hands I will do it!" She attempted to urge on her horse, but Mackenzie withheld her.

"Bantierna," he said, "Shane may be still within sight and hearing for aught we know: it were not safe to let him see thy displeasure; but listen, and I will tell thee what may well be done. I and Munagh Garbh will steal down, wrap a cloak about the young Saxon's head to keep her from crying out, and bring her away. If he should see us—well, what of that? We knew not it was in his protection she had been. We found an enemy's daughter in the wood, and took her for an attendant on the Bantierna More."

"Think you, you can carry her off unseen?" questioned the lady in a whisper.

"Make sure he has no suspicion of us," replied Mackenzie: "and then—what the Bantierna pleases to command."

"Alister," said she, "if thou canst carry her off, and avenge me, I will give thee as much land as there is betwixt this and Dungannon."

"We can do it, I am satisfied," said he. "She sits with her back to the wall, close by the open of a window. We will lift her through without shaking a curl of her coolun."

"The Saxon wears no coolun, Alister," said she bitterly; "yet he forsakes me for a short-haired stranger."

Mackenzie said no more; but, signing to Munagh Garbh, descended stealthily to the back of the ruined building. They executed their purpose without noise or struggling. Clara's face was covered, and her arms pinioned, before she could utter a single cry; and, in another minute, she felt herself placed on horseback before a man, and surrounded by his comrades who spoke in whispers in an unknown language."

"Well done, good Alister," cried the lady as he returned. "Munagh Garbh, thou shalt be promoted to the

axe for this; thou art henceforth my own galloglass; but what hast thou here?"

The kern stretched out to her the drinking-cup which he had picked up as they left the scene of the luckless supper.

"Bantierna," said the man, "it is O'Neill's own mead-her. I found it by the young Saxon's side."

She snatched it from him, and with vindictive gesture, flung it with all her strength down the steep bank below.

"Cursed be the wine, and the wine-cup of their banquet. Strangle her,—strangle her,—and cast her after it!"

"Bantierna," said Mackenzie, in an expostulating tone—but he had no occasion to urge further arguments of mercy, for while he spoke a prolonged and loud shout sounded from the woods, and the lady, with a cry of alarm, gave her horse the reins, and was followed by the rest of the party in equal consternation, and at as rapid a pace as the darkness and rude nature of the road permitted. The Scot was calling the name of Clara Warden through the wood, in an agony of distress. He had returned, and missed his companion. There were the mantles on which she had sat, and the napkins spread beside and undisturbed, but she was gone, and there was no answer to his repeated cries. He seized a brand from the fire, and rushed into the wood, for he thought he heard the tramp of horses. He held his torch above his head, and cleared the thick beech-grove; a rough horse track was before him, and a company of mounted figures, who or what he could not guess in the uncertain light, spurring down in evident confusion and alarm. He rushed forward in chase, but all save one had passed and gone. He was intercepted, and must either fight or take

the hill side, for the Scot had pushed him from the road among the furze and bramble. The hill below was almost a precipice; no horse could descend it; the Scot sprang upon him with a shout, but the horseman slid from his seat, and plunged into the thicket. Randall of Mull heard him crashing down the steep slope to the little stream below; but he did not attempt to follow; he blessed the chance that had given him a horse at his greatest need, and wondering much at the apparent cowardice with which an armed man had fled before his single and naked hand, he mounted the abandoned steed, and although hopeless of overtaking those whom he pursued, urged the horse down the track as long as he could distinguish it before him. But when at length the night, to his strained eyes, seemed to fall darker, and the way to grow more intricate and shadowy, he rode a little way into the wood at one side, and there tied his horse to a tree, and prepared to await the return of daylight. Fatigue and danger uninterrupted during two days and a night, save for the short time he had spent in such transitory pleasure amongst the embers of the ruined house, induced, notwithstanding his anxieties, the forgetfulness of sleep. When the east was growing grey with the summer sunrise, the Scot awoke, fresh and ready for whatever might befall him. He sat a moment, pondering with himself whether he had not been dreaming from the time when he first landed at Oldfleet Castle, up to the loss of his friend Clara; but the sight of the dim forest around him, and the charger standing by his side, soon assured him of the reality of his recollections, and the necessity of being up and doing. He sprang on his horse's back, and pursued the road he had taken on the previous night. It was but a stripe of greensward, leading at times into the dry channel of a torrent, and often lost, save for a narrow

pathway hardly to be traced among the trunks of overhanging trees; yet it afforded the only means that his clearer faculties could put trust in, of overtaking or succouring the ill-fated girl.

As the day broke, he looked over a wooded country whose hills rose black and precipitous upon the north and west. Here and there he could discern the walls of a deserted tower, or perhaps a patch of grazing or tilled land beside the ruins of a miserable village; but human habitation or human being he saw none till long after mid-day. The afternoon fell hot and sultry, for the stormy clouds of yesterday had cleared off, and the sun had penetrated the dank thickets and sedgy hollows, and a haze arose that dimmed the sharp blue outline of the mountains, and seemed to hang upon the very leaves of the forest with a clogging languor, which soon imparted itself to both horse and man. The Scot perceiving his steed's failing power, selected a spot of green herbage by the edge of a stream, and, secure that the weary beast would not wander beyond his pasture, removed the bridle with its heavy bit, took off the unstirruped saddle, and turned him loose to graze; then sat himself down by the little river's side, and gazed on the running water, musing on his strange adventures, till heat and fatigue again induced slumber. When he awoke, the shadow of the mountain-ash, under which he had been sheltered when he lay down, played in the evening breeze upon the opposite bank of the stream. He rose hastily, but was startled to see a handsome youth attending upon his waking, cap in hand, on the bank beside him.

"Duine Waisil," said the young stranger, in a humble voice, "you will need a horse-boy to carry your lance and shield—may I attend your nobleness to the wars?"

The youth spoke in the Gaelic dialect of the north, and

when the Scot questioned him whence he came, he replied, "I come from Sorley Buy, with letters to the Reagh Mor—I have left them with his scribe MacEver, and my errand is accomplished, I am weary of the stables of Dunluce, and would fain follow some brave gentleman to the field."

"What is thy name and lineage, my gallant boy?" asked Randall.

"I am Jeniko MacRickard MacCormack," said the boy; "and the reason why I ask for service in Tyrone is, because I am a Macquillen, and I hate the Scot."

"Why serve him then?" was the rejoinder.

The youth turned a fierce and suspicious glance on his questioner but was silent.

Randall of Mull smiled, and said, "Thou dost mistake me; why, I would ask, dost thou, being a Macquillen, serve Yellow Sorley in the stables of Dunluce, and why bear his letters over the hills of Tyrone?"

"In Dunluce, which is mine own castle by right," replied the boy, "I serve the tyrant because I was his prisoner; in Tyrone, because he made me swear by the tomb in the Cathedral of Coleraine, that I would do his errand ere he let me cross the drawbridge—none but a Macquillen, as he knew full well, dare venture up the Bann, and therefore I was chosen."

"Thou art a youth of spirit," said the Scot, "and I would willingly take thee into my service, but that for certain weighty reasons I must just now ride alone. If, however, you can direct me the way to Foich-na-gall, I will reward thee."

"You will see the camp of the Reagh Mor, noble sir, from the top of yonder hill. O'Neill himself is absent, if it be he whom you seek."

"It is the Bantierna O'Neill, to whom I have an urgent

suit," replied Randall, for a faint hope of seeing his unhappy cousin crossed his mind—"if thou wilt tell me in what part of the camp I may find her," he added, "I will give thee thanks and reward."

"The Bantierna Mor," said Jeniko MacRickard, "has her pavillion on the right of the main street; thou wilt know it by the Red Hand floating from the flagstaff. I saw her early this morning, entering with her train from the woods, and it seemed to me that a maiden who was with them was in some sort their prisoner."

"Good Jeniko," cried the Scot; "tell me, I beseech thee, what was the dress of that maiden?"

"She was wrapped in a mantle," replied he, "and I marked no part of her dress save her shoes; but, by virtue of my baptism, I never saw such shoes on lady's feet before; they had red pieces of wood two fingers deep beneath the heels, fine golden clasps upon them, and"—

"*Lamh dearg* marks the pavillion, thou sayest?"

"Noble sir, yes—the '*red hand*' of O'Neill—may thy suit prosper! the daughter of the Scottish Earl is all-powerful with the Reagh Mor."

"Whom meanest thou?" asked the perplexed Scot.

"She who had rather be an Irish Bantierna than the Countess of Argyle," replied the boy.

"Jeniko," cried the Scot, "thou tellest me of the wanton wife of O'Donnell. I ask, where lies the tent of the lady of O'Neill—of the daughter of Sir James Kintyre?"

"Ah!" said the boy, "truly I have made a great mistake. By my hand! I pity that poor lady, Scot although she be; and Sorley, I can tell thee, foams at the mouth to hear of her wrongs—more sorrow on the yellow wolf dog is my constant prayer, but I would not ask it through means of the lady Catharine, who once

bought off my own uncle, Tibbot MacCormack, when he was prisoner to the great Earl of Sussex."

"O'Neill then treats her unkindly, Jeniko?"

"By the beard that I expect on my face," said the boy, drawing back a step, "were it not that I have some thought thou art thyself O'Neill, I would say that Shane *an Diomas* is a cruel man."

"Fear nothing, Jeniko," said the Scot, "but tell me why thou takest me for O'Neill?"

"A bard, noble sir, described the Reagh Mor to me, as he last left the camp, mounted on a grey charger, clad in a purple cloak, all fringed with golden tassels, wearing even such a plume and cap as this; and being a tall gentleman of free and ruddy aspect—all as thou art, noble sir."

"Jeniko, I am not O'Neill; I must see the daughter of Kintyre—direct me to her tent without delay—but fear nothing, so thou tell me true," rejoined Randall with emotion.

"It is a poor lodging, sir, on the left of the camp, hard by the little river. I know not how thou wilt distinguish it, unless by the loneliness of the doors; for the poor lady neither moves out herself nor suffers her maidens to show themselves while her cruel kinswoman, the Bantierna Mor is in the camp. In truth, sir, she is here by force, for if she had her liberty she would not be long, methinks, from our own fair country of the Route."

"Is there no other mark thou canst give for my guidance, Jeniko?"

"Yes, yes, noble sir, I had forgotten—a galloglass keeps guard before the door; to-day it is Hugh Duff MacAulay; you will know him by the heft of his battle-axe, which I myself painted red and white for him, on consideration of his letting me ride Sir Neale MacPhelim's bay horse to water."

The Scot placed a coin in his hand of greater value than he had ever seen before. "Jeniko," he said, "I will take thee into my service, if thou wilt but promise to be silent and do my bidding."

"I will be your true man," replied Jeniko firmly.

"Then follow me at a distance to the camp—say nothing of our meeting, and await my further orders at the gate, which is nearest to the road leading hence to Armagh—how call you it?"

"The Dungannon gate, noble sir."

"Knowest thou the road to Armagh?"

"I know it not, noble sir, further than five miles from the camp; for the English are on that side, and although they be still beyond the Blackwater, we are not permitted to hunt for fowl in that direction."

"Then farewell for a while, Jeniko, be silent and punctual."

The Scot had now no doubt that the Irish Chieftain whom he had left on Ram's Island was O'Neill in person, and that Clara had been seized by his jealous concubine, he himself being mistaken for John the Proud, from the accident of his having doffed that Prince's dress. He formed the resolution of profiting by this casual resemblance, and taking his chance of passing for the great rebel, till he might obtain an interview with his cousin, and endeavour to accomplish the release of Clara Warden. "If they believe me to be O'Neill," he argued with himself, "and know that I had sight of their party in the wood they will not dare to offer any violence to Clara. The proud adulteress will at least secure my poor friend from all chance of dishonour; so if my plan should fail, I alone will suffer; perhaps the English army may release her—perhaps the jealous woman may voluntarily send her home. Alas! I little thought three days ago that I should so

soon be thus involved in the fate of one now dearer to me than I thought woman would ever be again ! ”

Occupied with such reflections, he rode along, scarcely observing that the road grew gradually wider and more beaten as he ascended the hill pointed out by Jeniko, as lying between him and the camp, but on coming to the brow of the eminence, he was amazed to behold the strong and extensive encampment which occupied the plain before him. The number of the huts before him fully accounted for the deserted appearance of the country, and herds enough to have pastured all the waste meadows he had passed, were scattered over the plain, one part in staked enclosures, beside piles of all kinds of forage. Troops of mounted soldiery were seen patrolling the woods, and a battalion of galloglass at exercise on the glacis of the inner camp's entrenchments. The sun had already set, and the favourable twilight was approaching ; but he longed for a deeper dusk before he should venture on the perilous attempt ; at the instant, while he hesitated, an outpost recognised him, and drew up at a little distance, presenting arms, till he should pass. It was too late to retreat. He, therefore, pulled his cap over his brow and galloping up, bowed as he passed the guard undiscovered ; he then crossed the plain at a rapid pace, and made for the nearest entrance. Here again the guard turned out, hailing their chief's return with loud acclamations of delight and attachment. He passed the barriers with equal success, and turned his horse's head, amid a crowd of uncovered and amazed retainers, down the narrow street of huts to his left. The rumour of his arrival flew through the camp on all sides ; but the strangest report that had ever yet agitated the public of Foich-na-gall was, that O'Neill was riding at the top of his speed to the quarters of his lawful but long-neglected lady. Hugh Duff

MacAulay dropped his gay battle-axe thunderstruck, as he saw the royal apparition leap from his horse on the grass-grown esplanade, throw to him the reins, and pass right up to the door of the desolate-looking booth. It was opened by a woman, who, uttering an exclamation of delight and surprise, ran before him into her mistress's apartment to announce the happy tidings. Randall threw himself into a seat in a corner of the low hall, and averted his face, as he heard the quick step of the astonished lady. She paused when she saw that he did not rise to receive her.

"My Lord—O'Neill," she said, "I am here as thou hast commanded. Nora, do thou withdraw; the King would be alone." As soon as the attendant retired, the Scot arose and extended his hand; she took it fondly, kissed it, and said, "O'Neill, thou hast long been a stranger to thy wife's house; but I have no will now to upbraid thee. Let me sit again in love and peace by thy side, my lord and husband." Then, taking her seat on a low boss of rushes on his right hand she continued, "Nay, turn not away thy face, gloomy although it may be, to think how fearfully thou didst win me, and how wantonly thou hast cast me off. I will not upbraid thee; I swear to thee I will not again complain. Shane, dear Shane, why dost thou tremble in the embrace of thy wedded and true wife?"

"Dear Catharine," he whispered, "as you love the Clan McDonnell, your own King, and would atone for the sin you have done, restrain yourself, and refrain from alarming those about us. I am not O'Neill, but thine own cousin, Randall of Mull."

The wretched lady spoke not. She sank back insensible; he caught her as she fell, and, with the quiet action of a determined man, laid her gently on the ground

beside the window, which admitted the evening breeze. The moment she re-opened her eyes, his voice was urging new entreaties in her ear. "Sit up, Catharine—lean on me, and fear nothing. We are safe from discovery. O'Neill is at this moment far from Foich-na-gall. Forgive me my disguise, dear Catharine; for my life, and the life and honour of one dearer to me than myself, depend upon its success. Alas! I have practised a cruel deception on thee, my wronged and wretched cousin! But forgive me, for the sake of our joined hands in by-gone days in the chapel of Glenarm.

"Oh, Randall," she said faintly, "remind me not of those innocent and happy days. I dare not look back on them."

"May bright days be yet before thee, Catharine! But let us waste no time in idle words. The camp believes me to be O'Neill—I am indeed dressed in his cloak and cap."

"My husband!—what has happened to my husband?" exclaimed the unhappy lady, as a new terror took possession of her mind.

"I swear to thee I left him safe on an island of the great lake yesterday morning," replied he. "I will tell thee all in good time; meanwhile give this token," and he took the eagle's feather from his cap, "to the gallo-glass before the door. Tell him—O'Neill's commands are, that he go forthwith to the pavillion of the Lady O'Donnell, and receive from her hands the lady brought prisoner in her train this morning to the camp—that on his peril, he bring her in safety to me here, and also that he have four fleet horses ready for the road at a minute's warning."

"Thou dost not design to take me away, Randall?" said the lady, in alarm.

"Catharine, I conjure you, trust me," he said. "If

you desire it, I will take you hence, but not otherwise, as I am a Christian. Canst thou remember what I have said ?”

“I can,” she replied, “and will convey thy message myself to Hugh Duff, lest thy voice should betray thee, my dear cousin.”

“Right, right,” said he; “and bid him also fetch hither the boy, whom he will find awaiting my commands at the Dungannon gate.”

He turned, and seemed to occupy himself in the farther end of the apartment; and the lady summoned her attendant, and desired that the galloglass should be brought to the door. Hugh Duff appeared, received the orders and token, and being cautioned to see that he failed in no point of his instructions, departed with the step of a man charged with important authority.

Around the entrance to the Lady O'Donnell's pavilion was a crowd of eager expectants, in the midst of whom Alister Mackenzie, her secretary, stood in considerable alarm, awaiting the result of an aspect so unlooked for as the affairs of the royal booth had now put on.

“Way for O'Neill's messenger!” cried MacAulay, holding out the long feather, and clearing a passage through the staring captains and gentlemen, who recognised the token with accustomed respect, although they wondered much at the choice of the bearer.

“What are the King's commands?” said Mackenzie.

Hugh Duff began to repeat his message aloud: the moment the secretary perceived its tendency, he sought to interrupt him, but Hugh, with the boldness of office, persisted in declaring his commands before the assembled crowd.

“Let the maiden be brought forth speedily, Master Mackenzie—and on your peril see that the horses be fleet

and well-caparisoned," he called after the secretary, who sought his mistress in despair, while the supposed disgrace of the royal favourite spread with a rapidity even greater than the rumour of O'Neill's arrival.

"Good fortune never comes of broken vows," said one. "Hugh Calvagh may put the hall of Ballyshannon Castle in order for his lady. She will soon be knocking for admittance at his gates again."

"Rather say a cell in the Abbey of Boyle or Donegal," rejoined the other.

"Alister of the Isles is likely to change places with black Hugh—a pleasant sight to see our secretary shouldering the galloglass's axe before his own door!" cried a third.

"I had rather see him swing on his own gallows," said a fourth, "where many a better man than ever was his father's son has swung like a dog ere now, through his traitorous procuring," with much more of such ominous muttering.

Up to this time, no one had dared to announce to the Lady O'Donnell the return of O'Neill. She sat in an inner chamber meditating on the means of screening herself and friends from blame, should O'Neill have traced to her hands the abduction of Clara Warden, and of maintaining that supremacy which she had long enjoyed. Alister Mackenzie entered her apartment.

"Lady," said he, "O'Neill is returned."

"I am prepared to meet him, Alister," she replied; "hear my design, and admit him without delay."

"Lady," stammered the secretary, "O'Neill, I fear, knows all. He has but now ridden into the camp, on the very horse which Munagh Garbh abandoned in the wood."

"I am prepared for that," replied the lady, "Munagh Garbh deserted from our troop two days since: be it thy

business to arrange that report among my kern. It was the same party of the Lynagh-men who burned the Erenach Gallagher's house, still hovering about their prey, that stole the Saxon girl. Munagh Garbh is himself of the Muintir Lynagh, and has more than once threatened to take service under Turlogh. Thus is all accounted for: what sayst thou to my story?"

"All the wit of woman cannot save us," said the secretary; "the Scot's messenger saw us this morning as we brought her hither, and it is supposed he has told O'Neill as much, for the Reagh Mor has laid his commands upon us to deliver her up without delay."

"Faint-hearted fool!" cried the lady, "I will go to O'Neill. The messenger lied; it was my tire-woman Grana Ni Owen whom he saw—where is O'Neill?"

"Bantierna, prepare thyself for ill news!" said the secretary, "O'Neill is so enraged that he hath gone to the booth of"—he hesitated.

She started from her seat.

"Wretch!" she exclaimed, "what wouldst thou say? speak out!"

"O'Neill is with his wife, lady," said the secretary, "with the Bantierna M'Donnell—and I have sent him the young Saxon, as he commanded."

"Villain!" cried the enraged lady, "dost thou stand before me and call *her* his wife? Dost thou, to my face, tell me thou hast disposed at thy pleasure of my prisoner? Out of my sight, hence!"

Mackenzie drew back appalled by her violence; but when he saw her cast herself upon a couch, exhausted by her passion, and in tears, he approached her and said:

"Bantierna, thou hast done me wrong—I am true to thy service, Rise, we wil' go together, and appease O'Neill or die."

"What!" cried the miserable woman, "stand at the door of his lawful wife, and beg admittance to the man who scorns me? Never—never—I will sooner die than suffer that dishonour! Go, make thy peace if thou canst, but here I lie till death come for me, or Shane O'Neill!"

In the meantime Randall M'Donnell of Mull sat with his cousin, detailing to her the circumstances of his escape, and subsequent adventures, and eagerly expecting the arrival of his messenger. Lady Catharine listened in mournful silence to his story.

"Randall," she said, when he had finished, "thou hast told me that to which my ears have been long accustomed. O'Neill is abandoned and tyrannous; his paramour is proud and cruel. I have now been for three years the victim of daily and open insult from both—yet, oh forgive me if it be a sin! I love my husband still, and am satisfied to hope on in silence. Ask me not to fly: I shall never again show myself among the Clan M'Donnell. They call me the wife of my father's murderer, but oh, Randall, believe it not: he fell in the open field, and on the even beam of battle, nor knew I by whose hand, till I was long the wife of O'Neill. No—I will remain here and expiate my guilt, if guilt it be, in patient suffering.

She wept bitterly: the Scot, dashing a tear from his eye, turned to the window, for he heard the tramp of horses, and at the next moment beheld his messenger with Clara Warden and Jeniko mounted, and two led horses ready at the gate. He turned to his cousin—"Farewell, Catharine—mayst thou be happy!" he exclaimed; "yet I fear to think of the anger of thy husband—come with us even yet—I will protect thee: I will bear thee to England or to France, or whither thou wilt—anywhere but here."

"Go, go, and may Heaven be your guard!" she cried.

turning from his side, and hurrying into her own chamber.

The Scot, with a heavy sigh, crossed the threshold. A crowd was gathered round the court-yard: he waved his hand as a signal for them to retire: Jeniko, who seemed to comprehend his whole design, shouted aloud—"Way for O'Neill!" making his charger perform a demivolta into the thickest of the press, and effectually clearing a space round the little cavalcade. Clara had not dared to look up till she heard Randall's voice by her side. One earnest whisper explained all, and the next moment the party, Hugh Duff being desired to lead the way, were riding at a quick pace for the Dungannon gate. Jeniko, who had received some brief orders from his leader, addressed himself to MacAulay, "We take the Armagh road, my friend, and O'Neill would not be interrupted—let us ride on." The unconscious guide pricked out in front, and was followed over the forest path by the unsuspected fugitives.

While they were thus riding southward at their utmost speed towards the English camp on the Blackwater, a company of footmen were slowly wending their way towards Foich-na-gall, from the woods and mountains of the north. The rising moon displayed the haggard and toil-worn Irish of Ram's Island. Their leader, Shane *an Diomas* himself, drew his weary limbs with difficulty over the rugged pathway, yet refused the offered support of his companions. They gained the outposts of Foich na gall about an hour before midnight. The previous rumour of O'Neill's arrival had already spread to the furthest advanced guards, so, when the soldiers saw him now descend from the mountain road before them, they were perplexed with strange surmises. Used as they were to his wild life, it did not astonish them to see him marked

with all the tokens of flight and disaster, and they spread whatever fare they could produce, without question or comment, is his presence ; but a dreadful suggestion that it could be nothing but the King's *wraith* which had been seen already, soon spread among them out of ear-shot of the resting party.

"For what do ye lay your heads together, ye gossiping knaves?" cried O'Neill to a knot of whisperers round the next fire. There was no answer from the questioned party but one of his own body-guard, who, unobserved, had heard their ominous surmises, came up, and, in a low voice, communicated to him their import. O'Neill was not more superstitious than others of his time, but he shuddered as the man spoke.

"Who saw it?" he inquired, immediately referring the appearance to something supernatural.

"Here is Brian Roe MacGillespie, who says he was within an arm's length of it," said some one at the guard fire.

"Send him hither," said O'Neill.

A kern came forward.

"Say what thou hast seen."

"O'Neill," replied the man, "I saw your likeness, mounted and accoutred as you left the camp three days since, ride from the north gate to the booth of the Lady Catharine of Kintyre, and enter her door, leaving what seemed your horse in the keeping of the galloglass, Hugh Duff MacAulay."

"If the dead could rise," said O'Neill, thoughtfully, "I would say it was the Scot in my stolen garments. But no; the curragh went down ten miles from any land; the fishermen at Toome saw her founder; and cloak and Scot, and all the precious freight she carried, lie twenty fathoms deep in the middle of Loch Neagh.

No—bring me a horse, and ghost or devil I will question it. *Lamh dearg aboo!*” he cried, as he threw himself again on horseback, and the war-cry of his house was echoed after him from watch-fire to drawbridge as he galloped in the track of his mysterious predecessor through the camp. He made direct for the hut of his wife: there was a crowd of girls and women in the court, and a chorus of maidens singing—“We have brought the summer with us”—in congratulation under her windows. Shane’s heart fell as he heard his own condemnation in the people’s joy over his supposed return to right conduct. They recognised him as he rode up: a lane was opened for him to the door—aged women, matrons, and young girls, all blessing him as he passed. He was dumb from shame and terror; for he never doubted that he had been summoned to the scene by superhuman agency, though he preserved the boldness of his deportment till he got over the threshold—the long uncrossed threshold of his wife’s chamber.

“Catharine!” he cried, “what is this which has been here in my likeness—has it appeared to you?”

“Oh, my lord and husband! is this thyself at last?” exclaimed his lady, starting from her tear-wet pillow, and falling on his neck.

“It is myself, Kate,” he said, “but who or what has been this other?—tell me, I conjure you.” She looked up smiling through her tears.

“Oh, Shane,” she said, “I have a strange tale to tell thee—sit down and drink this cup of wine, and I will tell thee all truly and gladly.”

He sat down beside his wife, and she took his hand in hers, and told him all that had happened. The sinking boat, seen by the Toome fishermen, had been the other sail already mentioned. It was long past midnight when

Shane O'Neill left the side of his lady; he turned and kissed her as he left the door; his step was light and vigorous again, and the marks of his rough journey were gone. He walked straight to the great pavilion in the middle of the camp. The sound of lamentation was loud within; he hurried forward, and entering, found the Lady O'Donnell and her women mourning over the distorted body of Alistair Mackenzie. He had strangled himself.

"How now?" cried O'Neill, "who has done me this good service?"

The women told him shortly how it was; but the Lady O'Donnell, swelling with shame and indignation, uttered a torrent of reproaches, only interrupted by the entrance of another and more impetuous mourner. It was Hugh Duff MacAulay, covered with dust and blood; he burst into the tent crying that all was over, that O'Neill was lost—a prisoner to the English.

"Thou liest, sir!" said Shane, seizing the astounded galloglass. "Hast thou spread this news also in the camp?"

"By the head of O'Neill," cried Hugh, "this is either witchcraft or worse."

"There is no witchcraft in the case," said Shane, "beyond the ready wit of a brave Scot who has outdone us all with a cap, a cloak, and a stout heart. But tell me truly, Hugh, hast thou bruited abroad this thy news of my fancied capture?"

"O'Neill," said the galloglass, "I feared to throw the camp into confusion, and waited till I came hither ere I spoke."

"Thou hast done well, and shall be rewarded for thy discretion," said Shane; "and now draw thy breath, and tell me how this capture of your supposed O'Neill took place?"

"It was the strangest thing I ever saw," replied Hugh. "He and the young girl, and the boy Jeniko—a knife in his throat, young wolf-whelp—rode right up to the English outposts at Dungannon, and asked who commanded.

" 'Sir Dominick Warden,' said the Saxon sentinel. 'We surrender to him,' cried the young traitor, and up rode the advanced guard. I struck for O'Neill as long as I could hold my axe, but he called to me himself, as it seemed, to fly if I could for my life; and so seeing I could do no better, I e'en turned my horse's head and never drew bridle till I got to Foich-na-gall."

"O'Neill!" cried another messenger, rushing in, "by your head I have seen the ragged staff on the Deputy's ensign, floating in the moonlight, three miles south of Magherafelt. There has been a bloody battle at Toomeferry, and the English of Carrickfergus are in Killcoughtra."

"What is our loss?" questioned O'Neill.

"Thirteen of the O'Cahans and five of the O'Hagans, with an hundred and fifty galloglass, and two hundred kern and horseboys."

"Ha!" cried Shane, "this smacks of sweat in the palm. Go there, Hugh Duff, to the quarters of Sir Neale MacPhelimy; show him this my signet ring, and tell him to draw down his battle to the Hill of Moneymore, and to keep the pass against all comers; and do thou," turning to the other messenger, "get thee a fresh horse, and carry to O'Cahan my command, that he make stand in Tulloghoge with the clan Hagan. Now send me hither my secretary, Neal MacEver, call up Brian Barry and Harry Oge. Ah! my poor foster-brother. I had forgotten that shrewd stroke of the oar-blade, but it was fairly dealt and I forgive it thou wilt never again rise

at the cry of *lamh deary*. But enough of idle sorrow. Ho, MacEver, write to Sir Art MacMahon that I must have a thousand galloglass on the banks of Blackwater in a week. Brian Barry, thou art captain of the watch, double the guards on the north, and erect outposts. Rory Buy—send thither our chief herdsman—see thou that one-third of our creaght be driven ere daylight to the hills above Killymoone; let the women and children of the camp accompany them;” and so on, issuing orders, and arranging his plan of defence, apparently unconscious of the presence of the silent females. At length the Lady O'Donnell recovering from her consternation, ordered her attendants to lift the dead body of Mackenzie, and was about to have renewed her complaint—“Tut!” cried Shane, “get to your bed, ye silly women. My business is now with Elizabeth of England.”

[“And he went to London, and proved himself in diplomacy and craft, more than a match for Elizabeth and her ministers,” interrupted Hugh Roe O'Donnell, as Turlogh ceased. “I have heard that the Queen herself was bewitched by the handsome chieftain.”

“He played his dangerous game with caution as well as with boldness,” continued Turlogh; “for Shane got safely out of the lion's den, after many months of semi-captivity in London—nominally an honoured guest, but really a prisoner at her Majesty's pleasure. Not only did Shane escape the dungeons of the Tower, but carried back with him to Ireland—wonderful to relate—a considerable sum of ready money, bestowed on him by the proverbially stingy Queen.”

"What witchcraft did he use?" inquired Henry.

"A plausible tongue; a ready wit; flattering speech, and a gallant bearing," replied O'Hagan. "Shane, as you know, was a man of noble presence, splendid in his dress, accustomed to success with the sex. He took Elizabeth's measure, and artfully commended himself by well-timed flattery, to the Queen. He read her character, and availed himself of her weaknesses. For example: he observed how great was the influence of Essex, and begged of her Majesty to have him—O'Neill—instructed in the ways of English civilization by the favourite Earl. He consulted the Queen on every conceivable subject; submitting himself to her judgment, and telling her he relied on her assured friendship and protection. Flattery, and personal homage, prevailed with the vain, though able woman, and Shane got permission to return to Ireland, to introduce, as he assured her Majesty, English amenities into Ulster."

O'Donnell smiled sarcastically. "He had not much chance of success even had he attempted it," he remarked.

"Shane understood his clansmen far too well to have made the experiment," rejoined Turlogh. "His death, however, at the hands of the Scots of Antrim, in a drunken brawl, closed his career. And now his nephew, Hugh, Earl of Tyrone, having supplanted his kinsman, Turlogh Lynach has been inaugurated O'Neill, at Tulloghoge, and rules from Dungannon. All these events have occurred during your captivity. The Earl of Tyrone is preparing to measure his strength against Elizabeth's armies in the North. He knows the foe with whom he must cope, having been educated from his youth in England. And now, my Princes, if you can effect your escape into Ulster, and will embrace under his banner the National

Cause, we may yet see the power of Elizabeth humbled in Ireland, and the triumph of our Faith. The Earl of Desmond will rise; the King of Spain will aid us, and with the blessing of God, the heretics will be swept from the land."

"God grant it," exclaimed the captives with enthusiasm.

"And now to slumber," said Turlogh, "and in dreams confronting the foe, hear the battle-shout of the Red Hand for ever! '*Lamh dearg .Abuu!*'"]

THE END SECOND SERIES.

TOPOGRAPHY 2ND SERIES HIBERNIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS.



- Altmore*—The name of a large townland in the parish of Buncroy, County Tyrone, also of two townlands in the parish of Layd, County of Antrim.
- Antrim County*—North-East of Ulster.
- Antrim Town and Castle*—North-eastern Shore of Lough Neagh.
- Ards*—Upper and Lower, the north-eastern baronies of the County Down.
- Argyle*—A Shire in Western Scotland.
- Armagh*—A county and city in Ulster.
- Ballylessan*—A townland of Drumbo parish, County of Down, south of Belfast. There is a Ballylessan, a townland in County Antrim, near Ballymena, and another near Larne, in County Antrim.
- Ballyshannon*—A town where was a castle of O'Donnell, in the County Donegal.
- Bangor Abbey*—On south of Belfast Lough.
- Bann*—A river in Ulster flowing northward into and out of Lough Neagh.
- Bealfersad*—The ford of the *fearsad*—sandbank near the mouth of a river—now Belfast.
- Ben Edar*—Hill of Howth, County Dublin.
- Ben Madigan*—Cave Hill, near Belfast.
- Blackwater*—Northern river of that name flowing into Lough Neagh.

Boyle Abbey—County Roscommon.

Carnmoney—A parish in the County Antrim, a little north of Belfast.

Carrickfergus—A town and castle on Belfast Lough, County Antrim.

Carrick Mountains—Scotland.

Castlereagh Castle—Built within a rath, near Belfast.

Claneboy—*Clann-Aedha-Buidhe*—Yellow Hugh "descendants," north and south, a territory belonging to a powerful branch of the O'Neills in the County of Antrim, east of the river Bann and Lough Neagh, and in the north of the County of Down.

Cleraine—Town in the County of Londonderry, on the river Bann, about six miles from its mouth.

Collony Ward—Collinward, a hill townland in the parish of Carnmoney, County Antrim.

Connor—Parish and village in the County Antrim, giving name to the diocese.

Croagh Patrick—A mountain in County Mayo, near Clew Bay.

Crumlin River—Separates the baronies of Upper and Lower Massareene in County Antrim, and enters Lough Neagh, on the east.

Dalaradia—An ancient territory comprising the southern part of the County of Antrim and the greater part of County Down.

Desmond—"South" Munster, territory giving name to a famous Earldom.

Divis or *Deris*—A large tract of mountain near Belfast, on the west.

Donegal Abbey—In town and county of same name, in north-west of Ulster.

Drumbo—A parish in the County of Down, near Belfast, on the south.

Dufferin—A barony of County Down, bounded by Strangford Lough on the east.

Dundonald—A parish in the County Down, near Belfast, deriving its name from an earthen fort near the church.

Dunedragh—County Antrim.

Dungannon—Formerly a chief seat of O'Neill, giving name to a town and baronies in the County of Tyrone.

Dunluce Castle—Built by MacQuillin on an insulated rock between Bushmills and Portrush.

Edenduffcarrick—The ancient residence of the Claneboy O'Neill, giving name to Shane's Castle, in the demesne beside Lough Neagh.

Foich-na-gall—"Stranger's Hatred," camp of O'Neill, west of Lough Neagh.

Galloway—The western portion of Wigtonshire, next Ireland.

Glenarm—A village and glen on the east coast of Antrim.

Innislochlin—An island in the river Bann, near Coleraine. Also, there is an Inisloughlin in the parish of Magheramask, County Antrim, thus described by Fynes Moryson, "The Fort of Enishloghlin, seated in the midst of a great bog and no way accessible but through thick woods, very barely passable. It had about it two deep ditches, compassed with strong pallasadoes, a very high and thick rampart of earth and timber, and well flanked with bulwarks."

Kells—In the north of the County of Meath, a monastic foundation of St. Columba.

Kilbride—A parish south of Antrim, in the county of that name.

Killead—A parish in the south of the County of Antrim, near Crumlin.

Kileightra—"Lower Wood," Fastness of O'Neill, County Londonderry.

Killeleagh—Killyleagh, a parish and village near Strangford Lough, in the County of Down.

Killibegs—A bay and village on south-west of the County of Donegal.

Kintyre, or Cantire—South-western Scotland.

Kilmacrenan—A parish and large barony on the Atlantic in the north of Donegal. Here was the place of Inauguration of the The O'Donnell.

Kilultagh—The fastness of an O'Neill chieftain, situate in the southern extremity of the County of Antrim, and now represented by the barony of Upper Massareene.

Kilwarlin—The territory in Lower Iveagh, County of Down, which is separated from the County of Antrim by the Lagan, and of which Hillsborough is the head quarters.

Killymoon—The Stewart demesne, beside Cookstown in the County of Tyrone.

Knockagh—"Hill of White Thorn," County Antrim.

Lagan—River rises in Slieve Croob, and on arriving at the junction of the Counties of Antrim and Down, forms their boundary till it falls into Belfast Lough.

Laharna—Larne, a town and bay on the east coast of Antrim.

Lisnagarvey—The old name of Lisburn in the County of Antrim.

Linnemore—Ram's Island. Lough Neagh.

Loch Ryan—The inlet of the sea in Wigtonshire, at the end of which is Stranraer.

- Lough Neagh*—The largest lake in Ireland, bounded by Antrim, Down, Armagh, Tyrone, and Londonderry.
- Magherafelt*—A town and parish in the south-eastern extremity of the County of Londonderry.
- Magilligan Mountain*—Ben Evenagh, 1,260 feet high, over the entrance of Lough Foyle, on the south.
- Massareene*—Upper and Lower, two baronies in the County of Antrim, on the south-west.
- Moneymore*—A town in the southern extremity of the County of Londonderry.
- Mourne*—A mountainous barony in the south-east of the County of Down.
- Moylinny*—An ancient territory, now represented by the barony of Upper Antrim, in the County of Antrim.
- Moylush*—The Grange of Molush, in the parish of Templepatrick, County of Antrim.
- Muckamore*—A little south of the town of Antrim.
- Mull*—A large island in the north of Argyle, off the south-western extremity of which is the historic island of Iona.
- Nalteen*—Grange of Nilteen, barony of Upper Antrim, County of Antrim.
- Olderfleet*—The old name of Larne Harbour, now preserved in the ruins of the Castle of Olderfleet, at the end of the Curran of Larne, County Antrim.
- Ollarva*—The six-mile-water, flowing into Lough Neagh, below Antrim town, is the river designated as the Ollarva, in Sir S. Ferguson's writings. It rises close to the Larne river, which flows in an opposite direction, and is considered to be the Ollarva by the Bishop of Down and Connor.
- Ram's Island*—In the east of Lough Neagh, off the parish of Glenavy.

Reeks—Croagh Patrick, in County Mayo, is called the Reek (Rick), and in Kerry there are MacGillycuddy's Reeks.

Ross—New Ross, on the east bank of the Barrow.

Route—The ancient Dalaradia, a tract of country still known by that name, in the north-west of the County of Antrim.

Slicre Gallen—Mountain in County Londonderry.

Slicre Gullion—The conspicuous mountain in the south-east of the County of Armagh, towards Dundalk.

Toome—Toome Bridge, the crossing of that portion of the Bann, which flows from Lough Neagh to Lough Beg.

Tubbermore—Great Well, County Antrim.

Tulloghoge—The hill in Desertcreat parish, in County Tyrone, where was the inauguration chair of O'Neill.

Tyrconnell—The country of the descendants of Conell, now Donegal.

Tyrone—The country of the descendants of Owen, now Tyrone.

